

Humanizing Migration: A qualitative case study of a learning delegation to the United
States/Mexico border

by

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Humanizing Migration: A Qualitative case study of a Learning Delegation to the United States/Mexico border

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Abstract

This qualitative case study used a feminist social justice framework to explore a Learning Delegation to the border of the United States and Mexico as an intervention strategy for increasing social inclusion of migrants and improving perceptions of migration among North Americans. Participant observation, formal and informal interviews, and document review provided data that painted a rich picture of the ways in which primarily white, North American people shift their understandings about migration and migrant populations. The research suggests that there are several concrete ways that people change their attitudes or actions regarding migration. This includes the following: (a) Engaging in direct storytelling and shared human connection with people who were different from them; (b) Being in the same spaces and context within which migration and migration-related experiences happen, and (c) Improving their confidence and efficacy in migration-related advocacy efforts through exposure. An emphasis on local expertise and a sense of responsibility/privilege were also key thematic elements in the data. This study illustrates the potential role for social work to collaborate with immigration educators and advocates for paradigm shifts in North American society. This could foster social inclusion for migrants who are specifically coming into the United States from the southern border.

Keywords: migration, social work, xenophobia, border, education

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Dedication:

for my Mom and Dad, who taught me about justice.

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Part 1: Rationale & Methodology

Chapter One: Introduction

The focus of this dissertation is on a Learning Delegation about migration. This introduction describes the rationale and background for this research project, which explored a Learning Delegation to the border of the United States and Mexico and the ways in which the perceptions or actions of the participants regarding migration may or may not have shifted. This study was conceived and conducted throughout 2015-2018. During that time, the United States experienced significant polarization regarding migration acceptance and/or xenophobia, and included a Presidential election that illustrated harsh sentiment towards migration, especially across the Southern border. This study is important for social work because it focuses on a strategy for social inclusion of migrant populations. It is particularly relevant to social workers who want to work in a broader arena than settlement service provision in order to impact social attitudes toward migrants and citizen advocacy efforts for changes in restrictive migration policy. Learning Delegations are intervention strategies used by non-profit organizations to provide education and advocacy surrounding a particular social issue or location (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002). Different organizations sponsor Learning Delegations, and so particular goals and objectives may vary. However, the general goal of a Learning Delegation is to provide education about a particular region of the country and (in this case) provide incentives for advocacy involvement on the part of the participants once they return from their Learning Delegation experience. The term *migrant* was chosen for this study over immigrant or asylum-seeker because it more accurately reflected the non-singular categories that presume permanency in someone's physical location. Additionally, *migrant* was used by the activists and educators who work with the Project Partner, so it was the most appropriate term for the dissertation. The United Nations International Office of Migration defines a migrant as

...any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. (International Office of Migration, 2011).

This dissertation includes eight chapters divided into two parts. Part one included Chapters 1-3. The first Chapter explores the rationale and background for the study. Chapter 2 includes a comprehensive review of the literature, especially in the areas of social and political perceptions of migration, transformative interventions, and a theoretical framework for the study. Chapter 3 outlines the specific detail of the methodology for the study, including preparations, data collection, data analysis, and data synthesis. Part two of the dissertation includes Chapters 4-8. Chapter 4 gives an overview of the details of the Learning Delegation. Chapter 5 provides thematic reflections by the study participants who were involved in the Learning Delegation (before, during, and after their experience). Chapter 6 focuses on the identified strategies that were used to help shape perceptions and/or actions about migration. Chapter 7 reviews insights of the study participants related to their perceptions of change after the Learning Delegation, and Chapter 8 includes a discussion and implications for social work.

History of Social Work with Migrant Populations

Social work is involved with migration in many different ways (Balgopal, 2000; Dominelli, 2010; Nash, Wong, & Trlin, 2006; Valtonen, 2015). Social workers employed in social service organizations interact with migrant populations soon, if not immediately, after their arrival. For example, social workers' frontline work intersects with migrants when the latter are seeking employment, enrolling in school, establishing a home, addressing mental health

needs, learning a new language or culture, and understanding new social welfare systems. Social workers help families and groups of migrants through their engagement in the community in social and community functions. The National Association of Social Workers has published several policy and practice statements and guides in order to assist social workers in their work in migration-related areas. Finally, social workers have an opportunity to work with communities to influence public discourse surrounding the social inclusion of migrant populations at the local, national, and even international level.

Social work in the United States began with a keen interest in the settlement of migrant populations (Balgopal, 2000; Danso, 2015; Garcia, 2011; Healy, 2004; Sakamoto, 2007; Zuniga, 2004). Jane Addams, Grace and Edith Abbott, and Sophie Breckinridge, among others, developed programs in the settlement houses of Chicago to help primarily European migrants who suffered from severe poverty, social marginalization, and unfair or unsafe labor conditions. The immigrants they served were mostly Irish, Polish, Jewish, or Italian, who were impacted by multiple oppressions, including poverty, unfair labor conditions, and racial or gender discrimination. At this time, services were directed towards a “melting pot” ideal, with an assumed goal of assimilation into the host culture and the release of past cultural associations in an effort to melt into the local norm. However, social workers fulfilled roles of cultural mediators, supporters, and advocates (Balgopal, 2000). Social workers took the lead and helped marginalized groups by protesting for trade rights and fair labor conditions, in order to pave a way for more opportunities for immigrants. This settlement work spanned practice systems, integrating individual, family, group, community, and organizational/political systems. Given that popular views of migrants and others with low social status were not favorable, settlement social workers made attempts to encourage mutuality by helping their residents to share artwork,

food, and stories with one another and with the community (Knight, 2005). These efforts fostered connection and new understanding among migrant community members, helping them to shape their views based on their experience with others in the community.

More recently, globalization has dramatically shifted the traditionally local emphasis in social work (in general, and also in migration studies). Specifically, globalization in the United States has affected social work service delivery in three ways: (a) By shifting the relationships between clients and practitioners; (b) By expanding the context to include global social problems, and (c) By diminishing the domination of one nation-state for social welfare delivery (Dominelli, 2010). Globalization also resulted in fast-changing technologies, increased opportunities and activities related to mobility, and interconnectedness of economic and social institutions (Negi & Furman, 2010). With this increase in global perspectives, social service delivery became increasingly complex. The local and global became more integrated (Castles, 2015). This expansion to include more international and cross-cultural work challenged traditional social work practice because it integrated the individual with broader social goals of inclusion and understanding, challenging traditional power dynamics characterized and held by the Global North (Dominelli, 2010). The needs of migrant populations are magnified. Despite this shift, researchers find that the primary focus of social work intervention with migrants in the United States and Europe is still rooted in the global North and territorialized, meaning it is rooted in local norms and measured by local standards, primarily the host setting (Algarín, Bernal, & Sarasola, 2011; Dominelli, 2010), and it is treated as a linear process where a person simply moved from one place to another (Drachman, 1992). So, the social work profession must expand its models of social work with migrant populations in order to meet the demands provided by globalization and more complex social service delivery.

Traditionally, social work roles in the field of migration include functional tasks related to food, housing, education, mental health, and employment. They can also include initiatives for community inclusion or work in policy formation, social justice, research, and advocacy (Nash, Wong, & Trlin, 2006). Practice approaches in migrant settlement vary according to the local social welfare context and are rooted in local norms and values. More developed welfare states tend to have a more comprehensive support system for migrants (Valtonen, 2001). For example, in the United States, the federal goal of refugee resettlement is to help refugees be self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Resettlement policies are not comprehensive, and are based on this primary goal (self-sufficiency) and therefore do not attend to the holistic needs of refugees over time (Balgopal, 2000). Regarding social work and migration, there is a need for a more comprehensive, inclusive model of services that recognizes multiple oppressions that shape migrant identity. There is also a need to help shift from social narratives about migration that marginalize migrants to social narratives that are inclusive and compassionate (Dominelli, 2018).

Social work professional organizations address migration-related issues through recommendations for practice, community organization, or advocacy for policy changes. For example, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) holds a strong national interest in migration. NASW has published various resource guides and policy advocacy statements, including a resource guide for immigrant families and particular information about detention, child welfare, and family unification (Bess, 2011), and it has advocated on national legislative issues such as their opposition to restrictive state laws (e.g., the Arizona Immigration Law) and their demand for the rights for DREAMers (National Association of Social Workers, n.d; National Association of Social Workers, 2010). NASW strongly emphasizes individual social justice and equal protection or reduced marginalization and discrimination on an

individual/family level, but it gives less attention to larger structural issues or root causes of this oppression (Craig de Silva, 2006; National Association of Social Workers, 2013).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is also deeply concerned about the ways in which we train social workers to be prepared for work, both with migrant populations and as migrant social workers. Education and Policy Accreditation Standards since 2008 suggest a desire to advance knowledge and skills in transnational social work education, with a renewed emphasis on global perspectives and understanding the global context and an increased emphasis on cultural competence (Negi & Furman, 2010). The 2015 Education and Policy Accreditation Standards include this emphasis under Competency 2 (Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice) and Competency 3 (Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice).

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) work collaboratively on several projects, including developing a global definition of social work and global standards for social work education and ethical practice (International Federation of Social Worker, 2014). These two social work organizations also work to re-direct the common narrative about migrants' helplessness and emphasize strengths and capacity building instead. IFSW/IASSW encourage a political advocacy approach for social work, with a focus on social justice and ending intolerance; publically identify root causes, not just symptoms, of the problem (e.g., massive trade agreements that limit labor possibilities in local communities); and publishing particular information statements related to different migration groups (displaced people or refugees), international policy (trade agreements and migration policy), and public advocacy campaigns that focus on different migrant populations, including displaced people and refugees (International Federation of Social

Workers, 2012; International Federation of Social Workers, 2014; International Federation of Social Workers, 2015).

Despite stated goals within these social work organizations to improve global perspectives, end intolerance, and promote social justice, there are few explicit programs that invest in efforts to understand diverse perspectives and encourage dialogue to encourage social inclusion of migrant populations. This is particularly important, as discriminatory or fear-inducing perspectives contribute to a social and political environment (such as the 2016 election) that breeds distrust and increasingly restrictive policies and practices for migrants (Golash-Boza, 2015; Marrero, 2012). The following section of this chapter will highlight more specific issues in social work and migration.

Current Social Work Issues Related to Migration

The 2013 census estimated 41.3 million people who were foreign-born (more than 13% of the total U.S. population) are residing in the United States (Eaton, 2016). In 2016, the Migration Policy Institute extended that count to include all people who were foreign-born as well as their U.S.-born children, which is 84.3 million (27% of the total U.S. population). Fifty-one percent of migrants in the United States are women, and the most common nationality represented is Mexican (11.6 million in 2015) (Massey, 1987). This number peaked in the late 1990s and now is gradually falling (Terrazas, 2010; Zong & Batalova, 2017). Of course, these numbers are difficult to track when considering irregular or undocumented legal status. It is clear that the more recent expansion of temporary legal status increases the precariousness of migrant populations (National Academy of Sciences, 2015) and thus their willingness to report or be counted in such statistics. Likewise, with increased political polarization on immigrant issues, specifically prompted by the 2016 presidential election (Marrero, 2012; Southern Poverty Law

Center, 2017a), fewer immigrants feel safe reporting any personal information, either formally or informally.

Current challenges in migration and social work focus not only on settlement, but also more keenly on social inclusion. The World Bank defines social inclusion as “...the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society—improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity” (World Bank, 2018). In social work practice, this goal is complicated by the following factors: increasingly diverse populations (Balgopal, 2000; Menjívar, Abrego, & Schmalzbauer, 2016); a rise in nativism (a political position that prioritizes citizens over new residents or migrants) (Mayadas & Elliott, 1992) and marginalization of migrants (Syed, 2016); restrictive policy decisions that impact social welfare institutions (Golash-Boza, 2015); and more flexible and transient patterns of human mobility.

Neoliberalism contributes to the weakening of a philosophy that social care is a government responsibility and pushes a model of individualism and privatization instead (Dominelli, 2010; Suarez-Orozco, 2005). The marketization of social welfare turns service-users into customers, emphasizes efficiency measures, and rewards cost reduction even with reduced social health and wellbeing. These shifts, which started to become more common in the 1980s, impact services for migrants, depending on the delivery of social welfare services in their home and destination countries (Kim, 2009).

Scholars identify several current needs in social work and migration. First, there is a need to expand knowledge about migration among social workers and other service providers and to broaden the practice focus to include a more systems-approach for intervention. This includes: (a) improved understanding of global perspectives, trauma, and cultural competence and cultural

humility; (b) increased understanding and emphasis on context, including economic and political factors; (c) additional focus on community and policy practice; and (d) development of new models and paradigms for social work approaches and policies that can be flexible and applicable in varied settings (Elliot, 2008). This includes the need to move beyond the functional outcomes in direct services and look toward systemic issues and oppression. Broader goals, including social inclusion, participation, and human rights, need to be part of the social work agenda (Ife, 2012). Dominelli (2010) also asserts the need to center social work in a human rights and social justice framework:

...the commitment to issues of citizenship, human rights, and social justice provide a thread of continuity between past, present, and future aspirations for social work to become a profession that is considered relevant and effective in responding to people's needs. Doing so draws on a holistic approach to the world that both encompasses and explores the spiritual, the physical, and the social dimensions of human existence at the local, national, and international levels. (p. 151)

Second, migrants have particular needs in service delivery. These include family reunification, more funding for settlement services, additional personnel and expertise in the field (social workers, immigration advocates, attorneys, and judges), and need for direct employment or expertise coming from people with lived experience of migration (Castles & Davidson, 2000; Nash, Wong, and Trlin, 2006; Valtonen, 2015). According to Negi & Furman (2010), social work practice in migration should focus on: access to services; inclusion; empowerment; client-led services; holistic approaches; respect; cultural sensitivity; community development; collaboration; accountability; orientation toward change; and data-driven services.

Third, due to increasingly stringent, racialized, and punitive immigration policies, there is a need for stronger, comprehensive federal policies that will support migrant populations and address the dramatic inequalities and stigma they face (Martone, Zimmerman, Vidal de Haymes, Lorentzen, 2014; Migration Policy Institute, 2013). Improved advocacy in opposition to these punitive policies are also needed. Many immigration policies directly conflict with standards of human rights according to the United Nations, such as the rights to family unity; meaningful participation; freedom from discrimination or cruel or unusual punishment; a minimum standard of living; due process; territorial belonging; and equality and dignity (Golash-Boza & Menjívar, 2012; Golash-Boza, 2015; United Nations, 1948). For example, President Trump has proposed the repeal of the Flores Settlement Agreement, which provides legal limits to the amount of time a child who has migrated to the United States can be detained by the U.S. government (Human Rights First, 2016). Eaton (2016) suggests that true integration is only an afterthought:

The U.S. has no systemic policy for helping immigrants become self-sufficient, fully contributing members into their new society. Our federal immigration policy instead tends to focus mainly on the contentious matters of who will be let in, who gets to stay, and who needs to go (p. 204).

The current federal administration in the United States continues this focus without much regard for human rights standards and increased restrictions on migrant populations (Chappell Deckert, 2016; Human Rights First, 2016; Indivisible, 2017).

Lastly, social participation and belonging of migrants needs to be a more prominent goal in social work practice. Migrant populations in the United States (and elsewhere) are often socially and politically represented as struggling, vilified, and dark-skinned in the media (Menjívar, Abrego, & Schmalzbauer, 2016). Especially since the bombing of the Twin Towers

on 9-11, migrant discourse “...highlights difference as threat, dangerous, risky, and to be feared...such views underpin racist attitudes, which are particularly virulent in white supremacist discourses” (Dominelli, 2010, p. 97). These challenges to belonging are exacerbated by social policy that restricts access based on legal status rather than encouraging a healthy route towards citizenship or access to social care. This concerns social workers, as it directly connects to our practice ethic (included in EPAS Competency 2 & 3) of attending to oppressed populations. The following section of this chapter will provide an overview of perspectives of migrant populations in the United States.

Challenges to the Social Inclusion of Migrants

Social inclusion for migrant populations is a challenge, with increased risk of marginalization through social and legal exclusion (Syed, 2016; Urban Institute, 2011). Structural problems created by neoliberalism and global capitalism worsened income inequalities and labor exploitation and increased health and safety hazards, stress, and vulnerability (Duggan, 2012). Society still demands the labor of undocumented migrants, even while “othering” and stigmatization processes exist and migrants still need jobs. According to Passel (2006), undocumented laborers make up 29% of all U.S. agricultural workers, 22% of all domestic workers, and 27% of all food processors. In that sense, they “belong” in our economy despite any formal rights to inclusion. Clearly, social inclusion of migrant populations includes attending both to basic needs (micro) as well as looking for ways to incorporate their social networks and community participation (macro) and ensure their safety (Teixeira & Li, 2009).

Xenophobia, or fear of foreigners, is a considerable barrier for migrants (Mayadas & Elliott, 1992). Xenophobia is caused by both social norms (such as religion, rituals, values, and political affiliation) and social conditions (including class, education, age and gender) and is

expressed through strong examples of nationalism, individual or structural racism/discrimination, a lack of policies or procedures that respect diversity, and policies that ensure the potential for discrimination based on country of origin (Mayadas & Elliott, 1992). Dominant groups in society feel threatened by increased human mobility, especially from the South to the North, and tend to support more stringent anti-welfare attitudes towards migrants, blaming migrants for dominant group members' life circumstance or poor health and denying a need for migrant support (Xu, 2007).

Increasingly stringent immigration policies break families apart¹. Dramatic increases in detention and deportation demonstrate this brokenness, where basic human rights like communication, family, health care, and the ability to contribute economically are denied. Detention centers have been associated with verbal and physical abuse, poor medical care, lack of access to communication, overcrowding, and lack of access to legal assistance (Androff & Tavassoli, 2012; Chappell Deckert, 2016; Golash-Boza, 2015; Menjívar, Abrego, & Schmalzbauer, 2016). In this process, Latino groups, particularly men, are disproportionately targeted. This has a dramatic impact on children in foster care and single mothers trying to survive on their own (Menjívar, Abrego, & Schmalzbauer, 2016).

Perspectives on migration are increasingly polarized (Marrero, 2012). These perspectives and the political policies that parallel them have become racialized and religious, with added restrictions and more punitive reactions toward migrants who have darker skin or are Muslim. This increasing divide showed in heightened political rhetoric in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and controversial policies developed by politically and religiously conservative parties

¹ Increased restrictions in immigration policy occurred during the Obama Administration, and the 2016 election included xenophobic political rhetoric towards migrant populations. Currently, the Trump Administration has proposed numerous changes to immigration law that would restrict access to basic migrant protections under the law. Although it is discussed in Chapter 8,

since the election. This brings belonging and marginalization of migrants to the forefront of discussions on local, state, and national levels.

Prompted by stringent immigration law (e.g., Arizona SB 1070, passed by Gov. Jan Brewer), immigrant advocates were motivated to support and encourage the inclusion of migrant populations (Eaton, 2016). This perspective argues for ideals of inclusion, business development, enhanced and diverse neighborhoods, increases in bilingual education, strategies to confront racism, and increases in political power for marginalized groups. These efforts illustrate a primary value of integration, and generally include the people most directly associated with migrant populations in daily life: English as a Second Language teachers, community organizers, faith leaders, non-profit organization leaders, or small business collectives (Eaton, 2016).

Alternatively, research on anti-immigrant positions tell us that those who oppose the integration of immigrants tend to be male, have a lower levels of education (i.e. high school), are involved in low-skilled or industrial work, and distrust federal government and politics (Art, 2011; Bauer, 2016; Hochschild, 2016). Their distrust of immigrants, according to sociologist Hochschild (2016), illustrates a concern for unified identity, and fear of the removal of their personal freedom, a lack of protection, and a distraction from local cultures that are enduring and strong. They are afraid that migrants, as well as members of other marginalized groups, are getting to “cut in line” for benefits and special attention they neither earned nor deserved by character. For some of them, joining like-minded groups gives them a sense of purpose and solidarity, which builds momentum within anti-immigrant movements. Since the recession in 2009, there has been a large increase in patriot groups concerned about maintaining jobs for white American citizens. While these groups are not ideologically homogeneous, there is a common theme tied to economic insecurity and nativism (Bauer, 2016; Blee, 1996; Hochschild,

2016). Mols & Jetten (2014), in their analysis of populist, right wing speeches in Europe, found that the use of nostalgic narratives and a disconnection to the past (or the way it used to be) perpetuates the harsh treatment of immigrants and a negative stance against integration.

The Southern Poverty Law Center reported a dramatic increase in bias against different groups of people in the three months following the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Increases in white nationalist flyers, hate crimes, and bomb threats were reported, with the most common target being immigrant groups (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017b).

Between these two highlighted perspectives (pro-migration and anti-migration) are many people in the middle, including those who carry sincere concern for their communities and friends, who may not know much about immigration politics or know any immigrants themselves, and who perhaps do not have a clear sense of how their own political participation (or lack thereof) may encourage or inhibit immigrant belonging. Hochschild's (2016) inquiry with the American Right illustrated that there are possibilities for practical cooperation, or minimally deep listening across diverse perspectives related to migration, and that these efforts are important for breaking down an "empathy wall" (p. 233) that creates divisive responses.

Due to increased fear and skepticism across these polarized perspectives, immigration policies continue to be restrictive and to isolate families. Contemporary migration policies in the United States and Europe are more about monitoring and control and less inclusive of migrants' desires or aspirations (Valtonen, 2015). Social workers can play a key role in advocating for change within government and agency policies and practices, including increased participation and perspectives from migrant lived experience that might inform these practices. There is also a need for social workers to work on task items that insist on social legitimacy and focus on human, civil, and social rights (such as access to welfare, education, fair employment,

community relationships, and housing) (Valtonen, 2015). This means additional skills and training in analysis, transnationalism, political advocacy, intersectionality, values-clarifying policy and practice (Valtonen, 2012).

Even though migration from Mexico to the United States is decreasing, it is estimated that twenty-five percent of the migrants living in the United States are from Mexico, which is more than any other country (Zong & Batalova, 2018). Unlike Canada, who also shares a border with the United States, there is more discrimination and skepticism toward people who cross over on the South. Recent migration from Mexico to the United States has not been dominated by Mexicans but rather by people who are fleeing danger (i.e. threats from paramilitary groups or gangs, extreme poverty, devastation due to environmental crises) in their home countries of Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala (Chappell Deckert, 2016). While this has been happening since the 1980s, recent “caravans” of thousands of migrants who travel together for safety have been arriving at the US-Mexico border to request a credible fear interview² for asylum in the United States. The majority of them have been turned away (Migrant Caravan, 2018).

Theoretical Framework for the Study of Migration and Social Work

In this section of Chapter 1, I will provide a theoretical framework for this inquiry. Critical social work provides a lens to migration that accounts for both the personal and social elements of this practice area (Fook, 2002). It acknowledges power dynamics and structures of dominance and marginalization that prevent the social inclusion of migrant populations. Critical

² A credible fear interview is a guaranteed by law for anyone who enters into the United States, fears for their safety in their home country, and therefore is applying for asylum. The interview assesses the credibility of their fear.

social work is the basis for feminist social justice research, which requires a deep sense of reflexivity and prompted me to use first person throughout this dissertation project.³

Anti-oppressive social work practice, which is an offshoot of critical theory, includes a strong emphasis on social justice and social inclusion (Dominelli, 2010; Fook & Gardner, 2007; Ife, 2012; Valtonen, 2012). It also includes an analysis and challenge to traditional power structures and social influences that perpetuate marginalization of migrant groups. Social workers who work within this framework attribute social problems to structural societal issues (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, xenophobia), not individual failures. They are involved in multiple levels. Dominelli (2010) argues that community social work that facilitates emancipatory change can be the key to transformative social change. This model for social work services addresses individual and structural dimensions of social problems, prioritizes context, encourages reciprocal learning (client-practitioner), requires partnerships, and challenges hegemonic power and control in helping relationships. It fits well with the Learning Delegation because the Learning Delegation also looks at these elements as key ingredients for transformative learning to happen.

Dominelli & Campling (2002) also address individual and inter-group difference in the process of identity formation. Using interpersonal difference and polarities of who is more or less superior “creates borderlands that can be policed by those on both sides of the binary divide that is established between them” (p. 37). Therefore, they argue, that identity in the midst of difference is the site of struggle within new social movements that hold the tension between

³ Feminist qualitative research, which is rooted in critical theory and challenges power dynamics, suggests that the researcher is themselves an integral part of the research process. It argues that the researcher is subjective and their perspective is an openly acknowledged (and valued) element of the research process. Therefore, I have chosen to use first-person language as a way to acknowledge my own role and subjectivity in the research process (Hesse-Biber, 2013).

acceptance and rejection of the other. The two primary aspects of identity that are pivotal for creating more healthy interactions and understanding include a reflective and complex sense of self paired with the view that people can and will change based on their interactions and experiences of oppression.

Critical social work calls us to shift the status quo in ways that create meaningful and sustainable change related to the social inclusion of migrant populations. This critical social work perspective shapes the current study by using qualitative case study methods to understand the ways in which people may or may not change their perceptions or actions related to migration as a result of their experiences on the Learning Delegation. The study question examines the social problem of xenophobia and social exclusion of migrant populations and attempts to find individual and structural ways to address these social problems.

Rationale for Inquiry

Social work will continue our work of tending to the basic needs of migrant populations: helping them gain access to housing, education, and community resources. While these interventions are important, they do not attend to the ways in which societies marginalize migrants or help migrants feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. This is where there seems to be a gap in our professional scholarship. And this will be the next step for our interventions. In response to polarized perspectives about migration, social work needs to understand perceptions about migration and the ways in which these perceptions might shift based on different interventions. Going beyond the tangible needs and addressing the deeper roots of discrimination is the logical next step in social work practice with migrants. And, because of our commitment to enhanced wellbeing for all people, it must happen. Dominelli & Campling (2002) urged social work to do this when they wrote, “Remaining neutral, rather than displaying a commitment to

improving people's well-being in general, has enabled the profession to forgo challenging structural inequalities within the existing social order" (p. 71).

There is very little empirical literature related to interventions that are designed to promote awareness about migration, and there is no research to understand these interventions in the context of social work. Social work needs to prioritize work that will improve well-being for migrant populations, including social inclusion. This study informs the social work profession about an educational and advocacy intervention designed for North Americans to increase understanding and awareness about migration-related issues on or near the border between the United States and Mexico (called Learning Delegations).

One of the strategies that can influence perceptions of migration is a Learning Delegation, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3 and 4. Learning delegations use experiential strategies and storytelling to expose people to the realities of the migration experience on the border between the United States and Mexico. Therefore, it is an interesting focus for research in order to understand how social work could potentially get involved and foster change through shifted perceptions and potentially heightened interest in advocacy and action for migration inclusion.

Many non-profit and religious organizations offer similar programs, with varied terminology, including "delegation," "tour," "course," or "educational immersion trip." I am choosing to use the term "learning delegation" because it is the most generic used term across the different programs. These programs are usually short-term (5-12 days), sometimes religiously sponsored, and provide educational and advocacy content throughout the days and evenings at different locations on or around the border between the United States and Mexico. They all include content that comes directly from people who have migration lived experience. All of

these programs cost money (\$500-\$1,500 U.S.) and are usually open to participants who are 18 or older. Many offer scholarships for people without financial means to participate. However, these delegations usually attract people who have the means and motivation to attend.

Specifically, this study explored the experiences of North American participants on a Learning Delegation about migration across the border between the United States and Mexico. In particular, social workers need to consider migration from the southern border because migration policy and practices intersect with social work practice in a most direct more frequent way than migration from other areas of the world. It is also important to note that migrants who cross the southern border of the United States come from many countries. While the number of Mexicans migrating to the US is declining, the numbers of migrants from the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras) coming through Mexico is increasing (Cohn, Passel, Gonzalez-Barrera, 2017). The following chapter of this dissertation will examine scholarship that contributes to this effort, and identify key areas of inquiry that will fill gaps in knowledge about migration and social work interventions for social inclusion, with specific attention to the US-Mexico border.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In Chapter 1, I provided a brief history of social work with migrants, discussed current social work issues in this practice area, described varied social perceptions about migration, and gave a theoretical and ethical rationale for social work research in this area. Chapter 1 also outlined a need for a more comprehensive, inclusive model of services that include technical and legal support (understanding legal rights, accessing visas and/or citizenship, accessing social and legal services), direct services (mental health, identity, family and relationships), community services (access to medical care, education, literacy, and employment), advocacy and activism (social work action alerts and policy briefs that highlight the needs and rights of migrant populations), and social inclusion. This Chapter will evaluate the existing literature related to the topic of social work, migration, and social inclusion.

Figure 1 illustrates the general focus of this particular inquiry: social work and the social inclusion of migrant populations, specifically the strategies that focus on the ways in which migrant populations are received, accepted, and/or perceived in their host setting. Each of the circles illustrates a practice area that contributes to migrant wellbeing and social inclusion. Addressing negative perceptions about migration is shown in a star to indicate that it is one area that is less studied or overtly used in social work practice. Yet, the need for it is high. I developed Figure 1 in consultation with this literature (more extensively evaluated in my qualifying paper) for the purpose of this dissertation as a way to understand the different elements of social work and social inclusion of migrants.

Social inclusion is largely under-studied even though it is an important part of comprehensive services and social work approaches in migration. For social work, this is an interesting approach, because, instead of addressing this marginalized group of people directly, it

looks at the perceptions and understanding of those people who interact with them and potentially hold the privileges to make decisions about them. As much as studying white privilege is an important element of understanding race/racism, studying the perceptions of citizens about migrants allows us to understand some of the nuances of xenophobia that prevent social inclusion and belonging in the United States. This is a possible point for social work intervention.

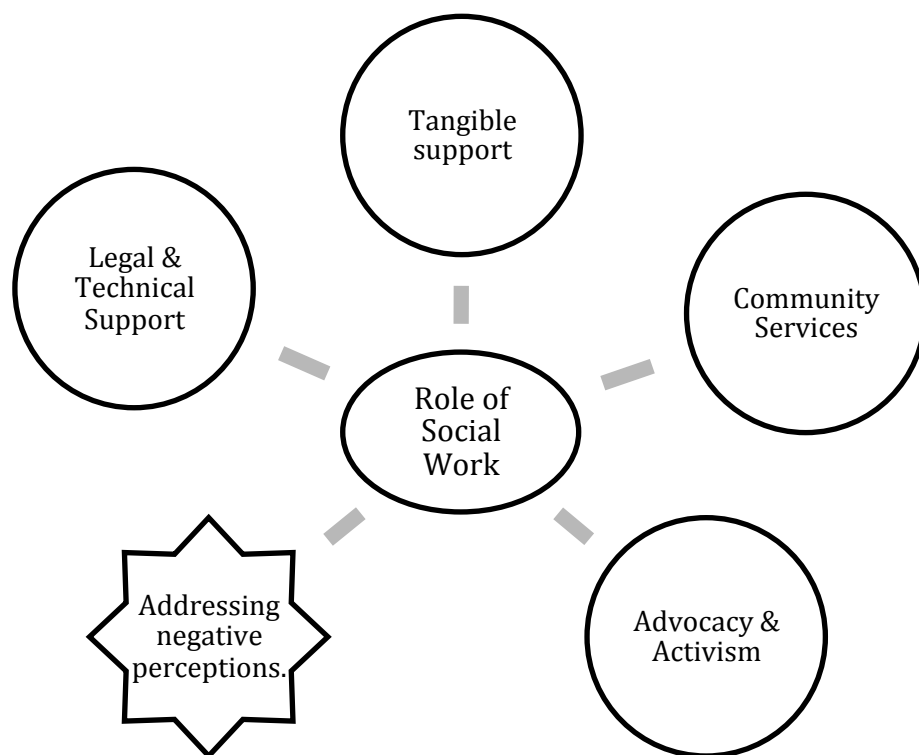


Figure 1. The role of social work in social inclusion of migrant populations

Many scholars have explored direct aspects of migration and social work that inform service delivery, transnationalism, settlement, and public policy (Algarín, Bernal, & Sarasola, 2011; Balgopal, 2000; Danso, 2015; Dominelli, 2010; Negi & Furman, 2010; Roth, Gonzales, & Lesniewski, 2015; Valtonen, 2015). This important direct practice work is prominent in the field of social work and migration. However, the deeper phenomenon of belonging and

marginalization of migrant populations is minimally addressed in social work scholarship. Social workers can evaluate the ways in which social perceptions inform actions and policy changes that restrict or support migrant belonging. These efforts should also include an understanding of the ways in which perceptions about migration are formed, the potential interventions that can advance social inclusion, and the values that inform social work practice in migration. Broader social goals such as inclusion, participation, and human rights need to be a part of the social work agenda (Ife, 2012).

For the purposes of this literature review, I searched for scholarship in social work and related databases (social work abstracts, Google scholar, PsycINFO, sociological abstracts), consulted with many experts in the field (such as leaders of non-profit service or advocacy groups and social work practitioners in migration and refugee services), reviewed information from nonprofit organizations who are interested and/or concerned about migration, and looked for sources through reference mining and the media. I also followed key legal and advocacy organizations online, which led me to current research that I then read and analyzed. This literature review explores relevant scholarship that informs this study and relates to potential interventions for social inclusion of migrants in the United States. In the following section of this chapter, I will highlight social work values that contribute to this topic. I will summarize and evaluate scholarship on perceptions of migrants, which help us to understand social and political sentiment about migrant populations. In the second section of this chapter, I will review interventions that are intended to foster social inclusion. Finally, I will provide an overview of this study's potential significance for social work.

Social Work Values

In order to understand the previous discussion surrounding theories for social inclusion of migrants, it is important to also consider the values that inform this work and shape our interventions. Social work holds six core values, including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, importance and centrality of human relationships, integrity, and competence (National Association of Social Workers, 2008). Many social work scholars included in this review argue for a more participatory and relational model of social work practice and research (Dominelli, 2010; Hugman, Pittaway, Bartolomei, 2011; Rossiter, 2011). In order for this to become more of a norm, power must be considered so that neocolonialist⁴ assumptions are not reinforced through these interventions (Gray & Fook, 2004; Jeffery, 2005). Razack (2009) promotes the decolonization of social work pedagogy and practice, specifically in international social work that reinforce unhealthy power dynamics with all expertise and decision making rooted in northern or western sources of knowledge. She contends that the West is the “prime exporter of social work” (p. 10) and this results in assumptions about expertise that maintain hegemony and unbalanced services. For example, more and more social works students are pursuing opportunities to study abroad. However, these are frequently unidirectional with minimal mutuality or exchange. They can also be perceived as contributing to a “white savior” approach to social work education or practice.

Therefore, it is very important that social work understand the colonial nature of the profession and work to understand postcolonial subjectivities so that students can understand their learning in a context that supports social justice and teaches about racialized and gendered spaces in social work practice (Fook, 2002; Midgley, 1981; Spivak, 1988).

⁴ Neocolonialism refers to the ways in which capitalism and imperialism contribute to the exploitation of other countries and/or cultures.

Empowerment, which is a primary feature of social work, is also a term that needs to be examined carefully and considered in relationship to social control. Using the language of emancipation does not necessarily lead to emancipation (Lysack, 2005). Indeed, such terms and efforts may in fact re-inscribe paternalistic relationship that assume a population or individual needs to be empowered. Instead, transcultural models (Fong, 2002; Raheim, 2002) “think of empowerment as a process that emerges from within the interactions, reciprocity, and responsive mutuality of the social worker and another person within a co-constructed relationship” (Lysack, 2005, p. 34). Empowerment, therefore, requires a reflection-in-action stance that is intrinsically connected to people’s lived experience and intersectional identity (Chappell Deckert & Koenig, 2017; Schön, 1983; Tomm, 1988).

Perceptions of Migrants

Before undertaking a thorough discussion about the ways in which migrant populations are perceived in the United States, it is important to be clear about terms used to discuss migration. In Chapter 1, I gave a broad and inclusive sweep of the issues in order to frame a rationale for this study. As explained in Chapter 1, I will use the term *migrant* because it broadly encompasses people with different (or no) permissions to cross a border and live in a different nation-state than they were born in (Castles & Davidson, 2000). However, it is important to clarify different kinds of migrant titles related to legal status for the sake of clarity. Table 1 illustrates this difference. All the people included in this table are considered *migrants* for the purposes of this research. The hierarchy of belonging gives a general overview of the ways in which migrants are viewed in favorable or unfavorable light, even though most people do not fully understand or recognize these subtle differences. This is part of social inclusion.

Table 1: Legality in the United States: A hierarchy of belonging among migrants

Hierarchy of Belonging: (Least to Most)	Legal Status	Definition
	1. Undocumented, or Unauthorized	People who entered the United States without a formal visa review process or formal permission.
	2. Temporary Protected Status	Foreign nationals from particular countries who cannot return to their country of origin due to safety concerns (ongoing conflict, natural disaster, or other temporary conditions) (National Academy of Sciences, 2015).
	3. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	People who were under age 31 by June 15, 2012, who came to the U.S. before they were 16 and have continuously resided in the US for five years. They have no current legal rights to be in the United States, have been or are currently involved in education, and have not been convicted of a crime (National Academy of Sciences, 2015).
	4. U-Visa for Crime Victim or Witness	People who suffered severe physical or mental abuse as a result of a criminal activity and/or are key witnesses in a criminal investigation. This can include domestic violence and can lead to lawful permanent residence after three years of continuous residence.
	5. T-Visa for Trafficking Victim	Victims of trafficking who is willing to cooperate in the trafficking investigation and would experience extreme hardship if returned to their country of origin.
	6. Non-immigrant Temporary Visa	People with permission to remain in the receiving country for a limited amount of time. This can include students, leisure travel, temporary workers, or other specialized visas.
	7. Refugee/Asylee	People who prove a well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. They may not be a security risk or perpetrator of persecution and they may not be a person who has committed certain crimes (Migration Policy Institute, 2013).
	8. Special Immigrant Juvenile Status	Granted to a juvenile (under 21) who is in the custody of an agency or department of the state, who cannot be reunited with their family, and cannot return to their country of origin for reasons of safety (Migration Policy Institute, 2013).
	9. Conditional Permanent Resident	Conditional residency status based on being related (marriage of child) to an LPR or citizen.
	10. Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)	People who live permanently in the United States who came with an immigrant visa or were granted permanent residence status (Urban Institute, 2011). Also known as green card holders.
	11. Naturalized Citizen	People who have met all citizenship requirements for

		the United States and have obtained citizenship.
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As immigration policy gets more restrictive (Golash-Boza, 2015; Elliott, 2008; Marrero, 2012; Mayadas & Elliott, 1992), there are social consequences across all populations, including an increase in negative perceptions of migrants, anti-immigration initiatives, and/or hate crimes (Martinez & Slack, 2013). Mathiesen, Carrilio, Rasmussen, & Engstrom (2004) suggest that the tension from these social consequences are the strongest in border areas, where biases are also strong: “It is at this crossroad that biases may be reinforced or dispelled, differences may be appreciated or pathologized, and languages may be used as a means of enhancing understanding or used as a wedge to separate and distort” (p. 42). Regardless of where they happen, these polarized positions contribute to a broader narrative that shapes the ways in which migrants are treated, both interpersonally and politically. When these positions are rooted in understandings that are not informed from direct input from migrants themselves, there is greater potential for misunderstanding (Valtonen, 2015) and perhaps even harsher perspectives about migration. Since this study focuses on migration across the Mexico border into the United States, examples will be provided that relate specifically to that region.

One example of this misunderstanding is evident in Salas & Ayón’s (2013) study, that included five focus group interviews with 43 Mexican immigrants or children of Mexican immigrants. The themes of their research related to migrants risking their lives, living in a persistent state of fear, and dealing with intense trauma and powerlessness. These narratives provide a counter-story to the more political and popularized image of Mexicans as criminals. Their study suggests that if people who hold negative perceptions of migrants do not hear these counter-stories, their perceptions remain unchanged. However, this assumes that, if they did, perhaps there would be a more inclusive or minimally empathic treatment of this population.

Social scientists in many different fields have developed ways to understand the ways in which people shape opinions about others and the way these opinions shape the ways in which they interact with others. Certainly, this can be a complicated phenomenon. It is important to use what these scholars have learned to inform social work interventions to encourage acceptance whenever possible, including in migration. This section of the literature review will evaluate studies from social work and other fields related to perceptions of migrants and the individual, group, and societal factors that influence these perceptions. Literature will be divided into the following sub-categories: theories and influences of anti- and pro-immigrant sentiment, and media and political influences on perceptions of migration.

Theories and perspectives on anti- and pro-immigrant sentiment. The following section of this Chapter will review theories and perspectives that contribute to anti-and pro-immigrant sentiment.

Social identity theory. Social identity theory is a theory of intergroup relations, conflict, and cooperation, developed in the United Kingdom in the 1970s (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). It examines the ways in which social categorization and social perceptions shape discrimination and intergroup conflict (Hogg, 2016). According to Tajfel & Turner (1979), a person's social identity tells them who they are on the basis of belonging to particular social groups to which they hold some degree of emotional value. Social identity theorists argue that the categorization of people, and therefore intergroup comparisons (who is in-group and out-group), makes people favor one group more, creating competition and ethnocentrism both consciously and unconsciously (Hogg, 2016; Trepte, 2006). This social categorization runs deep and can cause significant divisions between groups of people. Divisions worsen with increased certainty in the categorization. The more certain we are of those differences, the more marginal groups get

perceived and treated unfavorably. Therefore, social identity theory focuses on the “group in the individual” (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p. 3), where a part of our self is defined by the belonging we derive from group membership. Mols & Jetten (2014) write, “...social identity theory is better conceptualized as a process of becoming, whereby the present is evaluated in the light of where the group is heading and where it is coming from” (p. 76). Therefore, it is extremely difficult for people to understand a perspective that differs from the norms or values within which they associate.

Social identity theory can help us understand the ways in which perceptions of migration may vary according to different perceived threats or associations made about individuals who belong to a particular social group. Most studies related to perceptions of migrant populations highlight phenomena that contribute to positive or negative perceptions of migrants, including labor market competition, threat, and cosmopolitanism.

Labor market competition. There is some disagreement regarding the idea that negative perceptions of immigrants are derived from labor market competition. This idea is based on the argument that when immigrants come to the United States, they threaten particular jobs that would otherwise be held by native-born workers (Kunovich, 2013). It illustrates a context-specific cause of the perception of group threat (Lee & Lee, 2015). For example, some scholars found that less formal education and less exposure to education or work skills were associated with more anti-immigrant sentiment (Hainmueller & Hiscox, 2007; Haubert & Fussell, 2006; Hovey, 2000; Kunovich, 2013; Mayda, 2006). There are significantly more blue-collar and service workers with negative perceptions of immigrants than white-collar workers (Haubert & Fussell, 2006). Lee & Lee (2015) studied the relationship between anti-immigrant sentiment and relational or instrumental skill in occupations. They found that there is less intense labor

competition with immigrants with people who have more interpersonal or “soft” skills, and that this may play a role in attitudes toward immigrants. Regardless, there is some evidence that those in blue-collar and entry-level positions may feel a labor market threat, which can contribute to a more negative perception of migrants.

On the contrary, Hainmueller & Hopkins (2015) conducted a population-based experimental design survey to identify the specific attributes of immigrants that led to particularly positive or negative responses. Their study indicated that immigrants with more education and high-status jobs were held in higher regard than those who lacked plans for work or those who entered without authorization, who were Iraqi, or who did not speak English. These researchers found very little variance among their respondents based on education, political party, degree of ethnocentrism, or position in the labor market. Preferences for immigrants were consistent across all of those variables. This research contradicts theories that anti-immigrant sentiment is based on a labor market threat (Mayda, 2006; Scheve & Slaughter, 2001). It also highlights a consensus across diverse subgroups of American citizens for preferred immigrants (i.e. those who had higher education levels and higher status jobs). The authors state that despite this agreement, there is dramatic difference in opinions about how many immigrants to accept and how to appropriately address those who are already in the United States (Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015).

Theories of prejudice. In addition to labor market threat, other kinds of perceived threat have been studied. Ceballos & Yakushko (2014) evaluated three different theories of prejudice in their quantitative study, including: (a) perceptions of threat (based on Realistic Group Conflict Theory); (b) contact with immigrants (based on Contact Theory); and (c) cosmopolitanism (or a global worldview). In this Midwestern study, Ceballos & Yakushko (2014) wanted to explore

how these three theories potentially influenced attitudes toward immigrants. They found that there was a strong association between perceived threat and negative attitudes toward immigrants or perceived foreigners, and that direct contact with immigrants or perceived foreigners and a cosmopolitan outlook predicted more favorable attitudes in their respondents.

The first threat they studied stems from conflict theory, which explains how dominant groups are persistently in conflict with subordinate groups because of unequal power, status, or resources (Robbins, Chatterjee, Canda & Liebowitz 2018). This theory argues that dominant groups hold a “zero-sum” mentality. According to this theory, white people may hold more anti-immigrant sentiment because they have more to lose by increasing populations of migrant groups. Or, it is possible that there may be more competition between different kinds of marginalized groups as a way to gain power over others. Others illustrate conflict theory by framing the conflict as between native and foreign born (Quillian, 1995; Wilson, 2001) and that threats are based on social and economic threats to native-born people (Espenshade & Calhoun, 1993; Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996).

Likewise, Haubert & Fussell (2006) found that racial group identity predicts perceptions of immigrants among first- and second-generation immigrants, but not for those without immigrant experiences in their immediate family. There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions of immigrants between those who are native-born and those who have an immigrant background themselves, with more accepting perceptions from those with immigrant background. They also found that people who live in the southern part of the United States tend to have more negative perceptions of immigrants than people who live in other regions. There seems to be a more social basis for pro-immigrant sentiment, which relates to ideology and worldview (Haubert & Fussell, 2006).

Regarding gender, the same researchers found that neither age nor sex were significant predictors of perceptions of migrants. There is some research related to the ways in which immigration policies impact genders differently (Golash-Boza, 2015). However, this search yielded nothing particular to different perceptions of migrants based on gender. Perhaps a parallel perspective in racist movements, which are largely gendered, can be considered. In her interviews with 34 female racist activists, Blee (1996) discovered that many of the respondents came to their particular “racial enlightenment” (p. 689) perspective through a conversion that assumed a strict dichotomous narrative. This strict narrative derived from traditional gender norms that value patriarchy.

Personal prejudice. Personal prejudice can lead to discrimination and hostility toward immigrant groups, especially when people feel threatened (Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Scharzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin (2005) conducted three studies to evaluate the causal role that threat plays in attitudes toward immigrants. They found that perceptions of immigrants that included both real and symbolic threat led to more negativity in the in-group. Second, they found that negative stereotypes about immigrant groups led to more negative attitudes. Third, they found that group descriptions (positive or negative) led to intergroup anxiety, while empathy with a group (in this case, foreign exchange students) reduced negative attitudes. This varies according to different immigrant groups. People respect those with status, or those who demonstrate competency, and dislike competitors, or those who are seen as cold (Fiske, Cuddy, Glock, & Xu, 2002). While these studies may begin to help us understand the roots of pro- or anti-migrant sentiment, each person’s perspective may vary according to their own life experience.

Cosmopolitanism. Finally, cosmopolitanism and contact with immigrants were identified as protective factors against anti-immigrant sentiment (Ceballos & Yakushko, 2014). Haubert & Fussell (2006) also found that the most important variable that influenced pro-immigrant sentiment was a cosmopolitan worldview, which they defined as “people who are highly educated, in white-collar occupations, who have lived abroad, and who reject ethnocentrism” (p. 489). The global worldview in cosmopolitanism is increasingly in tension with a more local worldview (parochialism) that feels threatened by globalization and desires to turn inward towards local norms, family, and community (Chandler & Tsai, 2001; Haubert & Fussell, 2006; Hochschild, 2016). While some phenomena may be associated with more accepting or more restrictive perceptions of migrants, it is difficult to generalize these into rigid categories without looking at the particularities and subjectivities of individual cases.

Media and political influences. Media can influence the ways in which the public perceives migrant populations. Some scholars even suggest that media uses strategic tactics such as fear or uncertainty to stimulate a defensive response among U.S. citizens against the threat of being invaded by people who may be dangerous, diseased, or destructive (Cisneros, 2008; Esses, Medianu & Lawson, 2013). Depictions like this may contribute to a process of dehumanization, which means that corrective or punitive action against these “threats” can be justified. Dehumanization of particular social groups (in this case migrant populations) involves a full exclusion of them from the human species. This process may occur against low status or victimized groups more often than others because people with high status want to protect their privileged positions and support the status quo. Esses, Medianu & Lawson (2013) call this a “Social Dominance Orientation,” where hierarchies and inequality are justified so that only the strongest can survive (p. 523). They found in their studies, for example, that labeling someone as

diseased in media images leads to dehumanization. The portrayal of refugees as “jumping in line,” or as having illegitimate arguments for entrance increased the likelihood of dehumanization. Lastly, associating migrants as a perceived threat (both implicit and explicit) increased dehumanization and dehumanization increases the feeling of threat. These labels are used strategically in politics and media.

Some scholars suggest that these negative portrayals have worsened as a result of globalization and neoliberalism (Hier & Greenberg, 2002; Varsanyi, 2011). Uncertainty surrounding immigration leads to a higher media focus on negative stories and can result in more extreme negative reactions to immigrant and refugees (Esses, Medianu & Lawson, 2013). Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong (1998) also suggest that directly challenging existing negative attitudes toward immigration can actually make them worse, and instead there should be systems to bring people to better understandings through relationship building and connection. Self-reflection and focusing on individual attributes and similarities with others help to de-emphasize group orientation and decrease a perception of threat.

In her analysis of newspaper article editorials, Yoo (2001) evaluated the U.S. media portrayal of older immigrants who receive Social Security benefits. Generally speaking, she found letters to the editor advocated for more restrictive policies, and op-ed pieces or editorials advocated for more inclusive policies. She argues that media has a direct influence on policy decisions. Prior to the Personal Responsibility and Work Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (HR 3734), which ended legal immigrants’ eligibility for federal means-tested entitlements (no cash assistance, food stamps, Medicaid) and impacted people with disabilities and the elderly (500,000 legal immigrants who were aged or disabled lost cash and health assistance), the press coverage was negative and advocated ending aid to immigrants: “Older immigrants were

portrayed as an ever-increasing population that did not deserve of SSI. Their adult children were depicted as financially able, but irresponsible in the care of their aging parents, having left the responsibility to the American taxpayers” (p. 57). After the legislation passed, the press portrayed low-income elderly immigrants as legitimately in need of aid. Perhaps most notable in Yoo’s research was that all of the voices that constructed the social problem and were represented in the press were those who did not have direct, lived experience with immigration.

Interventions for Social Inclusion

The following section of this literature review will explore different interventions in social work and related fields that attempt to increase new understandings and foster social inclusion. They do this under the presumption that perceptions about others (specifically migrants) can change from a negative perception to a more positive one. The first part of this section will review theoretical understandings related to transformative education for social change. The second part of this section will address scholarship regarding study abroad programs or learning delegations. The final part of this section will explore potential social work that could promote social inclusion. These are explored because they are directly relevant to the purpose of a Learning Delegation, which is the particular strategy chosen for this study.

Transformative education for social change. Transformative learning theory describes a process by which learners move from prior understandings (frames of reference) to new perspectives through learning that is self-reflective, thoughtful, and critical. For Mezirow (1997), a frame of reference includes two dimensions: the “habits of the mind” and a “point of view.” The former relates to the understandings we have assumed based on our cultural, social, economic, political, or psychological background. They are more fixed and difficult to understand without some degree of exposure to other worldviews. The latter is more subject to

change based on reflections of experiences, our problem solving and exposure to challenge. Malleability depends on environmental and/or interpersonal influence.

A frame of reference is transformed through the challenge of problem solving and an interactive dialogic process with others. Mezirow (1997) contends that empowerment and the development of autonomy is intrinsic to the learning process. In order to be effective in collaborative problem solving, the learner needs to be critically reflective of their assumptions about others. In order to be effective in the personal transformation of a frame of reference, the learner needs to be critically reflective of self. Both involve critique, challenge, and reflection. It is a simultaneously active and affective process (p. 10). Educators in this model serve as “provocateurs” who offer support and a respectful space for discovery.

There are various interpretations of transformative learning theory. Rather than focusing on specific processes or objectives to be met, a holistic approach to learning is encouraged, which includes engaging in affect, intuition, and relationships in the learning process. The emphasis, therefore, becomes to understand learning through honoring alternative, non-traditional ways of knowing. In addition to challenging the students, this approach challenges the instructor or facilitator, as it also requires their own self-reflection and openness to change (Snyder, 2008; Taylor, 2010).

Many theories of transformative education for social change are based on a Freirian model of conscientization (Freire, 1970), and the call in peace studies for a “moral imagination” (Lederach, 2005, p. 5). This moral imagination requires a loose acceptance of feelings balanced with concern and includes creativity, the ability to imagine potential alternatives to an unsatisfactory situation, setting goals with multiple ways of reaching them, and making a plan to reach these goals (Rivage-Seul, 1987).

Transformative learning relies heavily on a dialogic process of meaning making through new experiences. It is often prompted by stressful experiences (intercultural experience, personal identity crisis, natural disaster, loss, or accident) that make the individual question their existence and their purpose in life (Taylor, 2010). Bourjolly, Sands, Finley & Pernell-Arnold (2016) conducted a case study analysis of a multicultural program called Partners Reaching to Improve Multicultural Effectiveness (PRIME) using transformative learning theory. Their study used multiple methods to explore uncomfortable micro-aggressions that happened in the class and resulted in emotional reactions that led to transformative learning. They recognized the complexity and intersectionality of their participant perspectives and confirmed their prior assertions that “pathways to intercultural sensitivity are nonlinear” (p. 97).

Another primary element in this theory posits that in order to learn about others, it is important to start with the self. In order to be effective in collaborative problem solving, the learner needs to be critically reflective of their assumptions about others. In order to be effective in the personal transformation of a frame of reference, the learner needs to be critically reflective of self. Both involve critique, challenge, and reflection. It is a simultaneously active and affective process (Mezirow, 1997). This theory informs perplexity by the challenges it gives to prior assumptions/understandings of the world.

In my 2017 article, Dr. Terry Koenig and I proposed a transformative model of perplexity for social work, based on Jane Addams’ work with immigrants at Hull House in the 1920s. We suggested that norms within social work practice are shifting based on a variety of factors. For example, increases in migration and globalization require practitioners to be more sensitive to cultural nuances and more creative and open in their intervention strategies. This requires an approach to social work that honors the expertise of lived experience and relies on the use of self

in the critical exploration of discomfort, uncertainty, and transformation. It is no longer an option to base social work on pre-conceived strategies, all of which have been thoroughly tested and screened for accuracy. Due to these shifting norms, we need to increase our reliance on intuition, curiosity, and authentic connection with others. This happens through perplexity. The five elements of perplexity we propose are: (a) exposure and immersion into an unfamiliar context; (b) a critical perspective that examines privilege and power in collaborative relationships; (c) an experience of dissonance or discomfort; (d) patience and persistence in not knowing; and (e) transformation of prior understandings by which growth and change occur (Chappell Deckert & Koenig, 2017).

Likewise, Rossiter (2011) calls for an “unsettled social work” (p. 990), where the ethics of the philosopher Levinas encourages us to examine the status of the profession of social work and the ways in which it may deny expertise from everyday people. She argues that we need to put these ethics before knowledge, by moving beyond particular positions that totalize and be open to new understandings that come from the lived experience and uniqueness of whomever we are with (e.g., migrant populations). We do this by suspending judgment and moving beyond critical social work that is based in knowledge, to a place of “sociality” that promotes this Levinas ethic of the other as unique and valuable. Specifically, we use active listening, with an “openness to revelation” (p. 993) where we value the answer more than the question.

According to Ruch (2002), reflection includes an analysis of structural and personal power, identifies the importance of affective and sensory perceptions, and integrates the use of multiple sources of knowing (experiential, intuitive, non-hierarchical, non-gendered and tacit). The emphasized skill in reflection includes curiosity and “not knowing” (p. 352). Fook & Gardner (2007) described a facilitated model for group reflection. During this process, there is a

recognition of the perplexity faced by the practitioner: “In particular it acknowledges the place of emotions and especially anxiety, in professional practice and recognizes them as valid sources of knowledge and understanding that need to be embraced” (p. 356). The process is emancipatory and empowering. It encourages a deeper level of understanding that is inclusive and embraces ambiguity. The educator’s role in this model is presented as a “co-explorer.” The author explains the “metacognitive” part of practitioner development, which requires tolerance of uncertainty and a willingness to be vulnerable.

Philosopher, musician, and theorist Donald Schön (1983) described a reflective approach to practice that uses the metaphor of swampy lowlands. He wrote: “There are those who choose the swampy lowlands. They deliberately involve themselves in messy but crucially important problems and, when asked to describe their methods of inquiry, they speak of experience, trial and error, intuition, and muddling through” (p. 43). These tangled spaces of simultaneous decomposition and generativity provide powerful opportunities for growth and change, and contribute to the broader goals of empowerment and systemic reform. An emphasis on process/reflection over outcome is prominent in Schön’s (1983) book, *The Reflective Practitioner*, in which he explains that an over-emphasis on outcome or results prevents sufficient attention to the engagement, experience, intuitive efforts, and understanding of process in practice. His concept of reflection-in-action is “central to the ‘art’ by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict” (p. 50). So there is some promise for this approach when addressing diverse perspectives of topics where there are strong, high-value feelings, such as migration.

Saleebey & Scanlon (2005) also employed Freire in their argument for critical pedagogy in social work education. They see a need for a radically altered pedagogy that challenges

traditional and hegemonic tenets that are accepted by the status quo. They think transformation in the classroom could happen through the use of more group processes/group work, dialogic learning, more reflection, and sharing of personal experiences with oppression. In this process, a “healthy appreciation for ambiguity and disagreement” (p.13) will be fostered. This, in itself, is social work that contributes to social action through a facilitation of shifting perspectives and new understandings. Blunt (2007) agrees: “Transformative learning occurs when learners develop an enhanced awareness of how their knowledge and values guide their own perspectives. Acts of learning can only be referred to as transformative if there exists a process by which primordial questioning and reconstruction of how an individual things of behaves occurs during the learning” (p. 96).

Transformative learning theory relates to critical theory through feminism. Feminist principles of attention to process, connection, empowerment, and integration also contribute to transformative dialogue on this topic, where there is an integration of ideological perspectives and social/experiential process that helps empower people to understand, potentially even accept a different perspective (Coates & McKay, 1995). These are the key elements for a change in perspective.

While none of these theoretical contributions speaks solely to migration, they all include ideas that inform strategies for shifting perceptions, which is a crucial element of this inquiry. With regard to transforming perspectives on immigrants, Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Schwarzwald & Tur-Kaspa (1998) found that focusing on similarities, or the assimilation of immigrants into an in-group, does not influence perceptions of immigrants. Rather, fostering an understanding of different experiences and empathy toward those experiences is more likely to cause a softening of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Danso, Sedlovskaya & Suanda (2007) examined specific conditions that may reduce prejudice toward immigrants. They found that a focused attention on others in a way that honors individual values and differences was the most effective in changing perceptions, while a focused attention on group identity or attempts to frame similarity did not change negative perceptions. This means that strategies to improve perceptions of immigrants need to de-emphasize group identity and focus on individual values and connection. These strategies for transformative education are specifically connected to the objectives of the Learning Delegation that was the focus of this inquiry. These objectives will be explained in more detail later.

In the following section of this literature review, I will explore specific intervention strategies for building awareness and fostering social inclusion, including study abroad or cross-cultural learning programs, intergroup dialogue, and other community interventions.

Study abroad or cross-cultural learning programs. If one of the facets of a positive perception of migrants is a global mindset, then it is important to examine the particular strategies that can facilitate cosmopolitanism, including study abroad programs or learning delegations. Students and instructors can benefit from moving beyond a simple educational model of acquiring facts to a deeper, more meaningful, even transformative learning process. This may begin with both a physical and personal immersion into a foreign context (e.g., study abroad/learning tours). Most scholarship in this area focuses on young adults or college students and academic-related learning, with limited data on adult or non-academic learning (Stone & Petrick, 2013).

Study abroad offers students access to “real-life” experiences that challenge them and provide opportunities for new growth and understanding. With increases in globalization and transnationalism, a “global mindset” requires flexibility, mental plasticity, multiple frames of

reference, and cosmopolitanism (Cseh, Davis, & Khilji, 2013). Variations in context, depth of reflection, length of term, and pedagogy can lead to different outcomes for study abroad learners.

Clapp-Smith & Javidan (2010) found that in study abroad experiences between one and six months there were increases in a “global mindset.” Between six months and two years, there was no additional variance. However, in international exchange experiences lasting longer than two years, there was an increased development in a global mindset. Length of study abroad is also associated with shifts in cultural identification and willingness to dialogue with local partners (Hamad & Lee, 2013), which can facilitate new understandings. Of primary importance in this process is the ability to be critically self-reflective and to engage in experiential learning. There is some evidence of the benefit of even short-term immersion programs, including “getting out of the bubble,” crossing a boundary, and meaning-making (Jones, et. al, 2012, p. 207). These effects are especially prominent when the participants are able to integrate their learning and experiences into their “normal” life (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011).

Graham & Crawford (2012) evaluated three different models for study abroad programs for transformative learning experiences. They found that while different pedagogical models prompted different types of learning, all resulted in learning that stemmed from some kind of disorientation of previous knowledge and a shift in personal worldview. Likewise, Mills, Deviney, and Ball (2010) asserted that study abroad experiences need to stretch students beyond their comfort level, but not to the degree that they are shocked and cannot sufficiently adapt from the experience.

While learning delegations provide an interesting and relevant aspect of social work education, the sweet spot of transformative learning occurs when there is an increase in reflective and reflexive learning, and not just an acquisition of facts (Witkin, 1999). Some scholars have

criticized learning/study tours as potentially imperialist or oppressive, exacerbating power differences and encouraging a feeling of altruism for the participants because of the perception that they are giving something or doing good. Instead, the focus of these initiatives needs to be on intercultural dialogue, personal and social development, and challenges to identity/self (Rotabi, Gammonley, & Gamble, 2006). The most effective way for this to happen is through cultural mentoring, dialogue, and relationship building during study abroad (Engle & Engle, 2003; Paige & VandeBerg, 2012). Mutuality, understanding power dynamics and colonialism is a key element to the success of Learning Delegations.

The theme of giving oneself (through self-reflection, immersion, and critique of past assumptions) is consistent in the literature (Perry, Stoner, Tarrant, 2012; Sharma, Phillion, & Malewski, 2011; Witkin, 1999). This deep learning can lead to reduced judgment and more self-confidence, social flexibility, and cosmopolitanism. This is especially evident with experiences of immersion, the identification that things are not “normal,” attempts at communication in a second language, and sufficient time allowed for self-reflection (Clapp-Smith & Wernsing, 2014).

Velure, Roholt, & Fisher (2013) suggest that critically reflective learning experiences are “critical incidents,” prompted by disorienting dilemmas where our previous understandings do not work and we are forced to create new understandings in order to resolve the dilemma. In order to encourage critical reflection, it is important for study abroad instructors to spend less time on content and more time on process/reflection, specifically connected to these disorienting experiences. This can lead to a deep awareness of identity, including differentiating between self and other, which is a primary aspect of critical consciousness. In order to enhance critical consciousness, the student needs the experience, reflection, and dialogue with others to process

the meaning that was made from this experience (McDowell, Goessling, Melendez, 2012; Suárez, Newman & Reed, 2008).

A second important ingredient in transformative learning through study abroad is experiential learning. Students immersed in a culture get direct experience interacting with and dialoging with local experts, which may suggest that going alone or more immersive programs may be more effective. These interactions spark a more intimate challenge to personal assumptions and, through affect and relationship, allow for a more personalized opportunity for reflection.

John Dewey's (1938) contributions in experiential learning included challenges to prior understandings (or frames of reference), recognizing challenge or conflict between self/other, reflective interpretation for making meaning through a critical examination of self, and a claim of on-going transformation of one's own perspective. He suggested that this process happens because of three key elements: 1) a meaningful transaction between the student and the environment; 2) a personal connection made between the individual and the education; and 3) critical reflection about the experience/environment. This process helps us become more open and aware, increasing cultural sensitivity (Velure & Fisher, 2013). According to Perry, Stoner, & Tarrant (2012):

The sort of educative experiences that Dewey referenced are related to life, based on problems to be solved that awakened curiosity, of interest and intrinsically valuable to the learner, and brought with them a level of perplexity, doubt, or what Mezirow (1997) referred to as disorienting dilemmas (p. 680).

A study by Greenfield, Davis, & Fedor (2012) evaluated differences in learning between an international social work course taught in a domestic setting as compared to a study abroad

setting. While there were strong learning outcomes in both settings, the students in the study abroad class reported increased skills in cultural sensitivity, functional knowledge, and awareness of global interdependence and interpersonal adjustment. The authors posit that these increases were a result of the experiential learning opportunities and direct personal contact and dialogue the students had while studying abroad.

Velure, Roholt & Fisher (2013) suggest that engaged and decolonizing pedagogy methods that include counter-storytelling question hegemonic structures and privileges previously unknown to the student. This understanding of power difference is much more evident in contexts where the student is encouraged to think about identity, culture, and the “the other.” If the goal of the study abroad experience is to help facilitate transformation through dialogue and exchange, pedagogy that reflects critical theory and structural/power dynamics is necessary.

Lindsey (2005) proposed a connection between study abroad experiences and an enhanced commitment to social work values, including the following: open mindsets; increased awareness of personal values; a challenge to societal norms and increased social awareness; an increase in awareness of discrimination and appreciation for difference; an increased desire for social justice; and increased development related to professional identity. There is a strong alignment with study abroad objectives and social work values, specifically related to self-determination, social justice, and the dignity and worth of the person (Gammonley & Rotabi, 2008). Faver & Trachte (2006) suggest that social work student perspectives on study abroad is dependent on their own prior assumptions and norms related to interpreting phenomena (for example, poverty). For this reason, it is vitally important for students to be self-aware of these

perspectives before they go. These studies evaluate study abroad experiences for college-age students, while scholarship on adult learning processes is sparse.

In addition to study abroad programs, there are other interventions designed to transform social perspectives. These interventions (such as the Learning Delegation) are a good fit for social work (because of the values of social justice and dignity and worth of the person) but they also come from related disciplines like education, political science, and peace studies.

Intergroup dialogue. Another primary intervention to consider is intergroup dialogue. Intergroup dialogue has been studied in many different settings where people with dramatically different perspectives or cultural background get together to understand and learn from one another (Bar-on, 2006; Halabi, 2004; Villa-Vicencio & Savage, 2001; Zuñiga, Nagda, Chesler & Cytron-Walker, 2007). It is mostly used on university campuses and in diverse communities.

Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington (2006) describe intergroup dialogue as a peacebuilding tool used to help people with different social views create a facilitated and safe space to explore their ideas and/or feelings about a topic. Schoem & Hurtad (2001) define intergroup dialogue as “form of democratic practice, engagement, problem-solving, and education involving face-to-face, focused, facilitated, and confidential discussions occurring over time between two or more groups of people defined by their different social identities” (p. 6). The key principles for this intervention are to (a) promote positive intergroup contact; (b) form relationships, which are the foundation for transformation; (c) use strategies of listening and curiosity; and (d) engage in participatory and collaborative decision-making/planning (Mizrobe, 2001).

Evaluations of intergroup dialogue show it is a valuable way to examine personal biases, understand identity, reduced stereotypes, and identify similarities and differences across different perspectives for social change (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Nagda & Gurin, 2007;

Schoem & Hurtado, 2001). Schoem & Hurtado (2001) also found that it led to an increased commitment to social responsibility and social action. The University of Michigan Program on Intergroup Relations has implemented intergroup dialogue strategies across different spaces on their campus. In their longitudinal study, they found that this helped students improve analytical skills, increased cultural awareness, and improved an orientation toward social justice (Hurtado, 2005; Nagda, et. al 1999, Nagda & Zuniga, 2003).

In education for social justice, intergroup dialogue can help students learn critical analysis and a deeper understanding of oppression and difference (Nagda & Gurin, 2007). They report that it provided an “...open-ended process that allows all participants to gain new or deeper ways of thinking, to build relationships with others, and to work effectively on collaborative projects” (p. 37). It emphasizes community growth over individual learning and includes suspending judgment, deep listening, identifying and challenging assumptions, and reflection and inquiry. Social work educators think this could be accomplished with a closer integration between education and social action, including more group work and community building in the classroom, as well as the incorporation of experiential opportunities to engage with power and privilege (Chappell Deckert & Koenig, 2017; Dedziak & Profitt, 2012; Saleebey & Scanlon, 2005). Experiential opportunities such as these are a core part of the pedagogical model for Learning Delegations, where being in the context and listening to stories and details about migration seem to matter.

Community interventions. Libraries, museums, and other community organizations are working to create more programs and exhibits that humanize migration. Human Libraries, for example, began in Copenhagen and has spread all over the world. In this program, humans are dispensed as “books” to share their stories and experiences through their own subjective lens.

The intent is to counter prejudice and build understanding across difference. Refugees and other migrants are included as one option (Dreher & Mowbray, 2012; Watson, 2015). Museums are also coming forward and developing programs specifically to increase social inclusion for migrant populations, and these projects are growing in popularity (DePlonty, 2014; Rounds, 2006; Sandell, 1998). Other communities, large and small, are starting grassroots programs to support migrant populations and build understanding through relationships (Beyond Tolerance, 2017).

Faith communities also are working to foster social understanding and to contradict harsh migration policies. This movement has grown rapidly since the 2016 election of Donald Trump. There is a nation-wide movement of Christian congregations who are advocating for more inclusion of migrants. For example, more than 1100 churches across the United States are active in providing “sanctuary” for people without formal permission to be residing here and who are fearful of deportation (Barros, 2018). These efforts are perceived as valiant and supportive of migrant populations, but they have also been criticized as perpetuating a “white savior” attitude toward migrants, much like the Sanctuary Movement from the 1980s (National Public Radio, 2017).

Likewise, there are numerous faith-based organizations that offer learning delegations to foster understanding and education about migration issues and the realities of migrant lives. These programs try to bring migrant stories and experiences to life by offering an immersive and experiential program to people who do not have direct experience with migration. Their objectives are to foster empathy and knowledge in an effort to encourage a more positive view of migration. These delegations are usually short term, cost money, and are accessible to people without experience or knowledge in migration. They encourage their participants to be open,

curious, and completely engaged (physically, emotionally, spiritually, and affectively). There is limited research available that demonstrates the effectiveness of these delegations.

Educational strategies for shifting perspectives, including learning delegations, require key elements of collaboration, safety, flexibility, and responsiveness (Krajewski-Jaime, Brown, Ziefert & Kaufman, 1996; Kreitzer & Wilson, 2010; Mathiesen, Carrilio, Rasmussen, & Engstron, 2004). For transformative interventions to occur, there needs to be self-awareness, adaptability, and a willingness to give oneself to forming new relationships and share activities of daily life (reciprocity). Personal qualities of transparency, respect, sensitivity, humor, and humility can be helpful. Social work educators should also consider a shift from the more traditional North to South learning delegations and instead seek something that is more reciprocal and collaborative (Mathisen & Lager, 2007). The Learning Delegation (focused on the border of the United States and Mexico) that is studied in this inquiry seeks to include all of the previously stated elements of transformative learning.

Summary of Literature Related to Social Inclusion and Migration

The first part of this literature review explored the connection between social work values and this study. Both the core values of social work as well as the larger philosophical influences of social work that address power and colonialism relate to the topic at hand. Learning delegations could be a good fit for a profession that is concerned with relationships, decolonization, and cultural humility.

The second part of this literature review explored many different factors related to perceptions of migrant populations and the development, persistence, or transformation of anti or pro immigrant positions. Factors such as education, and occupation can influence these perspectives, in addition to perceived threat, either based in a loss of white majority, loss of

national sovereignty, or a cosmopolitan worldview or contact with migrant populations. As evidenced by shifts in immigration policy that is more restrictive and criminalized, perceptions of migrants are more dramatically polarized and reinforced through media and other social influences, especially under the current administration. Processes that dehumanize help perpetuate this problem into one that is increasingly difficult to navigate.

The final part of this literature review explored transformative interventions and the ways in which social work and related disciplines plan and implement strategies for understanding and social inclusion. Overwhelmingly, this literature suggests that the key to these interventions are relationship (groups), a strong degree of self-reflection and self-awareness, a facilitated form of dialogue or communication, and some kind of challenge or prompt that perhaps is uncomfortable or unsettling. This is common in many cross-cultural study abroad programs or learning delegations.

Significance of Study

Perspectives regarding immigration are increasingly polarized in the United States and other parts of the world, especially as immigration policy is increasingly restrictive, and media and political rhetoric categorize immigrants (especially those who have darker skin and lower social or economic status) as “others” who are not to be trusted. Increases in criminalization via more stringent pathways toward legal status, reduced due process, and contractual obligations with private detention facilities create political divides on an international, national, local, and even community level. Even in the last year, communities are mobilizing both to coordinate efforts to increase arrests and deportations of migrants who are here without authorization and also to create systems of sanctuary and/or protection for them (Indivisible, 2017; Sanchez, 2017).

Many social advocacy groups are actively involved in documenting this divide and creating advocacy efforts to educate and inform people about policy and practices that marginalize migrant populations. Others are working hard to disseminate information about various migrant groups (specifically Muslim, or from predominantly Muslim countries, or Mexican due to the proximity to the United States and discussion of a border wall) so that citizens of the United States are not threatened by extremist violence or the lack of jobs. Additionally, they associate these migrant populations with crime, specifically drug-related crime or violent extremism (Indivisible, 2017; Institute for Policy and Social Understanding, 2017; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2017a).

In the midst of all of these efforts, there are little to no formal structures in place for people to access new understandings. As I consulted with many field experts in immigration, it became clear that these interventions are increasingly necessary because of a very divisive political climate and hostile environment toward migrants. There is a need to foster conversations that can bridge an “empathy gap” that is slowly but steadily building tension in our communities, courtrooms, and borders. The literature suggests there is potential for this through learning delegations that are immersive, experiential, and build relationships through story sharing and connection.

The location of this study (United States/Mexico border) was chosen because of the proximity to the researcher as well as the connection to the Project Partner. Additionally, even though overall migration from Mexicans to the United States is down, there are thousands of people who come from Central American and other countries and are trying to cross that border into a country that at one time was perceived as a place of welcome and opportunity. Many are seeking asylum and have intersections of oppression such as gender discrimination, additional

age risk (younger or older populations), indigenous background, or history of domestic violence (Migrant Caravan, 2018). Finally, President Trump has built the bulk of his campaign and presidency on a hostile and protective anti-immigrant stance and sparked skewed perceptions of migration from the South.

Social work is in a key position to carefully address these divided perspectives in an effort to foster social inclusion. This key position is due to: (a) The prevalence of social workers who interact with social institutions who provide services to migrant populations, (b) The ethic of social work that calls for integrity and social justice, which requires us to listen to all of the varied perspectives in a social position and find suggestions for social change, and (c) The need to create interventions and social policies that foster increased understanding across social division, and contribute to increased belonging and diminished marginalization for all people. The focus of this research is not directly related to marginalized populations but rather puts emphasis on the forces that influence migrant social inclusion. Therefore, it prioritizes the well-being of migrants, whose reality in the United States is increasingly marginalized. This dissertation specifically looked at the use of Learning Delegations to the United States/Mexico border as a strategy for shaping understanding about migration and migrant populations. By extending the reach of social work into the communities that receive and potentially support migrants, we can better understand the phenomenon of social inclusion.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In Chapter 1, I provided an overview of migration and social work and suggested that social work can play an important role in supporting migrant wellbeing and social inclusion. In Chapter 2, I provided a review of the literature that relates to migration and social inclusion, highlighting potential interventions that are designed to shape understandings about migration, including learning delegations such as the one explained in this study. In Chapter 3, I will provide an overview of the methodology for this inquiry, including the research topic, framework for the inquiry, methods, the research context, my qualifications as a researcher, and the procedures for data collection/archiving, and data analysis. Following this overview, I will outline qualitative criteria that use a critical framework to establish rigor and trustworthiness established by Lincoln & Guba (1985). Finally, I will discuss the ethical protection and participation of the research participants in the process of this inquiry.

Research topic

This study explored North American participants' experiences on a Learning Delegation about migration across the border between the United States and Mexico. Using case study methods, the details and complexities of the Learning Delegation were illustrated by participant responses and experiences. This study explored the relevance of the case to social work practice in the area of migration.

Research questions. Four broad research questions listed below guided this inquiry. They were used to orient and focus my purpose and process of inquiry. More specific questions for detailed inquiry emerged spontaneously during the course of the study, resulting in themes that organize the presentation of findings in Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7.

1A. How do current and past enrollees on a Learning Delegation describe their experiences?

1B. What are the ways in which their participation influenced their attitudes regarding migration across the U.S.-Mexico border?

2A. How do program facilitators and administrators understand the program mission and design of the Learning Delegation?

2B. What is the usefulness of the mission and design in shaping the experiences of Learning Delegation participants?

Definitions of key concepts. There are several key concepts that guide this research and that need to be defined drawing on the introduction, rationale, and literature review in Chapters 1 and 2. Those include definitions related to logistical components of the research, such as *Learning Delegation*, *sponsoring agency*, *coordinator*, *participants*, and *researcher*, as well as the conceptual components of the research, such as *migration and migrant*. It should be noted that these are the working definitions for the purpose of providing orientation to the research project. However, they were not imposed on research participants. Rather, I followed their lead in language during the data collection process. They are defined as follows:

Learning Delegation: The Learning Delegation is a multi-day program designed and run by a non-profit organization for anyone who is interested in learning more about migration and border issues related to the border between the United States and Mexico.

Project Partner: The project partner is the organizational body that is responsible for the planning, organization, and funding of the Learning Delegation. They recruited participants for the Learning Delegation and were the responsible body for all of the content and implementation of the Learning Delegation.

Coordinator: The coordinator is an employee of the project partner who is responsible for the detailed planning of all of the activities and logistics of the Learning Delegation. The

coordinator was in contact with me before, during, and after the research process, and provided consultation for me as well as access to the participants.

Participant: There are three different types of participants in this research:

- *Current enrollees:* Current enrollees are those participants who enrolled and participated in the November, 2017 Learning Delegation. They have no formal role in the process of the delegation, other than learner. I was also a participant researcher on a Learning Delegation.
- *Past enrollees:* Past enrollees are those individuals who have participated in a Learning Delegation conducted by the same partner organization in the past 12-24 months.
- *Facilitators/administrators:* Facilitators/administrators are those people within the project partner organization who have a formal/official role in designing, implementing, and overseeing the Learning Delegation.

Researcher: The person (myself) most directly responsible for the inquiry from beginning to end.

Migration: The geographic, political, and social phenomenon of human mobility beyond community boundaries (Moch, 1997, p. 43). For the purposes of this research, this refers to migration across nation-state boundaries of the United States and Mexico.

Migrant: According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), a migrant is “any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (a) the person’s legal status; (b) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (c) what the causes for the movement are; or (d) what the length of the stay is” (International Organization for Migration, n.d.). This differs from the

term “immigrant” or “emigrant” in that it does not imply unidirectionality. For the purpose of this research, I use the term *migrant* to refer to anyone who has lived experience with movement from their home in Mexico or Latin America and is coming to live in the United States for any length of time.

This research provides suggestions for social work and related fields who sponsor Learning Delegations or similar programs, and who are interested in developing interventions related to people’s perceptions and understandings regarding cross-border migration. The “case” in this qualitative case study is the Learning Delegation sponsored by the project partner. Data included formal and informal interviews, participant observation, and document review.

The Research Context

The Learning Delegation is an educational and advocacy program designed and run by the project partner to educate North Americans about migration-related issues at the border between the United States and Mexico. The project partner for this research is a faith-based (Christian), global, non-profit organization that works to provide relief, peace, and service throughout the world. Their programs in the United States address peace education, decolonization, migration, and restorative justice. In the area of migration, this organization provides education and training related to the root causes of migration, supports refugees and internally displaced people, educates churches and other organizations about migration-related issues, and provides immigration law trainings in order to better equip people in migration-related political advocacy. This organization is well established and has been doing their work for nearly a century. It is a good fit for this study for several reasons: (a) They have a primary focus on partnering with local organizations and addressing local needs. This community participation element aligns with feminist social justice research. (b) I have connections with the

project partner, which means there is established trust and accountability in the partnership. (c) The constituents and participants of this project partner hold varied religious and political views about social issues (conservative and liberal, but primarily under Christianity). Therefore, there is an opportunity for diverse perspectives to be included on the Learning Delegation.

The program goals for the Learning Delegation highlight a need for more understanding about the risks associated with migration, the impact of migration on border communities, and the ways in which people can become involved as migration allies to highlight policy needs and support migrants in the United States. Specifically, the four goals of Learning Delegations are: solidarity, relationships, education, and transformation. (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002). These program goals align with the rationale and purpose of my study, which are outlined in Chapters 1 and 2.

Data for this project was collected on the border between the United States and Mexico in Arizona. After discussion with the immigration education coordinator for a faith-based Learning Delegation, I was invited to participate as a researcher in order to get a full understanding of the entire event.

The Research Design

All the procedures, theoretical grounding, and rationale for this research project are shaped by my position as a critical social worker and a feminist social justice researcher. I chose this approach as a result of my desire to be responsive to the values and ethics of social work and acknowledge my own positionality. They also align with the mission and goals of the project partner. My position as a feminist social justice researcher informed the qualitative case study methods to this research, which was designed to uphold the voices and perspectives of

marginalized populations (Healy, 2001; Lawson, et al, 2015; Pyles, 2015; Sutherland & Cheng, 2009).

For this study, I used the specific method of case study, which gave me permission to delve deeply into one particular scenario in order to learn more about that scenario and its implications for social work (Stake, 2008; Yin, 2013). Finally, I analyzed the data collected from the case study methods using constant comparative analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Findings from this study will help inform social workers about Learning Delegations and their use in education and advocacy about migration. The following section will describe my research paradigm for context and then provide more detail into the specific research design of my qualitative case study.

Feminist social justice research. Feminist social justice research comes out of critical theory, and requires a consideration of standpoint (Haraway, 1988; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; DeVault, 1990; DeVault, 1996). It is a research paradigm that aligns with critical social work and anti-oppressive practice as described in Chapter 1. It argues that there is a connection between the knower, the known, and the process of knowledge (Sprague, 2016). I included researcher standpoint in the research. Standpoint theory argues that all knowledge is constructed from a specific position (also called positionality) and that everything is viewed from that particular point of view. Therefore I will give a brief account of my standpoint.

I was raised in a family that cared deeply about human rights and social justice. For example, I have very early memories of my mother's involvement in the 1980s Sanctuary Movement (Prell, 1993). This was a religious and political movement that used civil disobedience to provide housing and transportation to Central American migrants who were unauthorized to be in the United States. She was a volunteer for this movement and, in addition

to attending many marches and advocacy events, invited Central Americans into our home, where they enthusiastically shared their cultural traditions with us. From my experience as a child, I was raised to pay attention to social inequality (racial, gender, economic) and speak to injustices wherever I see them. This was also encouraged in my own faith perspective as a Quaker and Mennonite. I later attended college, where I decided to major in peace studies and international development. The internship for this major led me to my first time living abroad. I moved to Mexico to intern with the Mexican National Institute of Public Health doing health advocacy with women who were pregnant or had just had babies. This internship sealed my interest in social work, and I pursued a graduate degree so I could practice. After 11 years practicing social work, I moved with my family to Bogotá, Colombia, where I worked with women who were forcibly displaced from their homes due to political violence and were seeking asylum in other countries. This prompted my interest as a scholar in migration.

All these experiences shaped my desire to focus on research that speaks to injustices around power and marginalization, and they gave a particular view into the interpretation of the research, which does not explicitly strive to be objective, but rather acknowledged subjectivity as a valid methodological path (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Sprague, 2016). During the course of the research, I persistently analyzed my subject position within research as a white, North American female, who grew up in the Midwest region of the United States. I maintain a lifetime commitment to staying connected to Latinx communities.

In addition to making my standpoint transparent, feminist social justice research requires that I continue critical reflection as a way to be cognizant of the ways my own understandings about migration are also shaped by the experience of the research itself (Carawan, Knight, Wittman, Pokorny, & Velde, 2011). The researcher is “an instrument with a responsibility to be

self-reflective” (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008, p. 484). Reflexivity was an important tool in the methodological process for a consistent analysis and understanding of the reflective process, the context of the research itself, and the understanding of power dynamics and transparency in the research process. For example, I recorded reflective journal entries and memos that will follow my process of analysis and interpretation from the conception of the research project through the final dissemination of findings. As a participant researcher, I documented and interpreted the space between my own experience and perceptions and those of other participants (Archer, 2009; Padgett, 2016; Reinhartz, 1992; Shope, 2006).

Feminist social justice research requires a relational and interactive approach to data collection, and emphasizes lived experience as a basis for knowledge (Hesse-Biber, 2014). It evaluates the stories that are being told, the stories being excluded, and the potential reasons why. All data collection is tied to connections between the researcher and participants. It cannot be interpreted in a vacuum but rather is persistently contextual, interactive, and fluid.

Feminist social justice research suggests possibilities for individual and social change, (specifically related to oppression and systemic marginalization), merging the micro and macro in social work (Cahill, Quijada Cerecer, & Bradley, 2010; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; McNamara, 2009; Reid, 2004). So it fits well with migration. For this research, oppression and systematic marginalization refers to the social institutional policies and political discourse that dehumanizes and criminalizes migrant populations (as discussed in Chapter 1 and 2). As a feminist social justice researcher, I paid attention to macro issues and committed to working toward actions that dismantle injustices (Reid, 2004). She places an explicit focus on addressing multiple oppressions and the mandate to create conditions within which all people will thrive (Cahill, Quijada Cerecer, & Bradley, 2010; Hesse-Biber, 2013; Kalsem & Williams, 2010).

McNamara (2009) argues that feminist social justice research is not only good for women, but for all people. This approach to social justice is political and calls for social reform to promote equality across gender, race, class, or other inequalities (Charmaz, 2016; Grey, Aggias, & Davies, 2014).

As a feminist social justice researcher, I chose to use qualitative case study methods informed by participatory research (Lawson, et al, 2015; Yin, 2013). I chose this design because the guiding principles and values of feminist social justice research fit well with this topic of social inclusion, with critical social work, and also with my own experiences and passion in social work. The research is participatory in that the enrollees, past enrollees, facilitators, and administrators will have both an experiential and action component as a part of the research process. Likewise, I will be a participant on the Learning Delegation myself, which adds a participatory spin to the study. Finally, certain research participants (facilitators and administrators) consulted with me in the process of developing research questions and designing the study. This research design is illustrated in Figure 2.

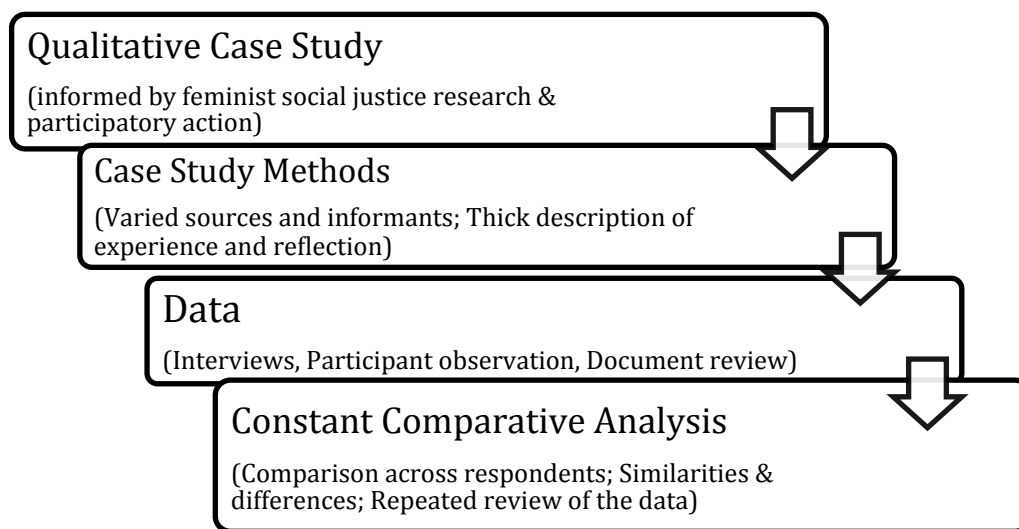


Figure 2: The research design

Qualitative Case Study. According to Creswell (2012) and Yin (2013), case study research is appropriate when there is a need to examine a particular condition in a particular context or setting. It is an approach that attends to both process and outcome of research (Stake, 2008). It allows the researcher to “extract depth and meaning” by examining multiple perspectives and data sources within a particular context (Padgett, 2016, p. 33). Some scholars argue that case study research is less of a method and more of a choice about study participants (Stake, 2008). However, Creswell (2012) argues that the method of case study helps the researcher explore a “bounded system” over time by looking at in-depth data from multiple data sources. Yin (2003) suggests that case study is the “method of choice when the phenomenon under study is not readily distinguishable from its context” (p.4). The research context itself is a critical component of the research.

Case study is a good fit with social work because it is interested in the particular lived experience and perceptions of individuals, the ways in which those experiences and perceptions are similar or different across individuals, and the particular attention to context. This case study is not quantitative or individual, but rather attends to the qualitative description of a particular initiative. It is a good fit for this study because the goal is to develop an understanding of the Learning Delegation and its context that draws from multiple sources regarding the participants’ experiences on the Learning Delegation.

Case Study Methods. This study uses case study methods supported by procedures that ensure the rigor or trustworthiness of the study. The Learning Delegation is the case, which means that research parameters are shaped around one specific Learning Delegation. In order to get a full description and in-depth understanding of this case, I integrated insights from multiple forms of data and varied perspectives across the Learning Delegation and as a participant

researcher myself. As I explored these insights, the complexities of the case were considered in context (Stake, 2008; Yin, 2013), and all of those insights were considered as I conducted analyses and developed findings. Case study methods align with my interest in the broad experiences and interpretations provided by the participants of the Learning Delegation process in an order to provide a descriptive narrative of the Learning Delegation.

One strategy that I used to encourage participation is a consultant panel. In consultation with my chair and other professionals in the field, I formed a consultant panel that provided feedback about many aspects of this research including refinement of question design, theory, implementation of the research, analysis, and interpretation of the findings. Members of this panel include people who are knowledgeable about this area of social work practice (through research and/or practice), people in related fields who use similar research methods or have particular expertise that may contribute to this project, and people with lived experience of migration. They were consulted at least during three specific phases of the research (planning, data analysis, and interpretation) but potentially at other times as needed. I contacted these consultants individually through email and/or telephone. They did not meet in a group and their names were not included for privacy reasons. Their specific role was to give feedback on the research planning details (i.e. interview guides), to reflect on the implications of my tentative findings, and to assist in the development of strategies for sharing the results with stakeholders in a way that may prompt active change in the area of Learning Delegations to the US/Mexico Border.

Key features of case study include: (a) Specific parameters of the research context/participants; (b) An in-depth understanding of the case(s); and (c) Themes from the case(s) are developed into assertions about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Stake, 2008). A

case study looks for patterns within and across different data sources to evaluate collective themes and descriptions for the case (Stake, 2008). Within this case study, I employed the data collection methods of participant observation, interviews (formal and informal) and document review (which will be explained later). Participant observation included written and recorded field notes collected by the researcher during the Learning Delegation at the border. Content reflected in this data included educational material, participant reflections and reactions, and other observational notes. Interviews were conducted by phone or Skype and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Documents related to the mission and purpose of the Learning Delegations were collected and reviewed as an additional data source. All data was analyzed using constant comparative analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Straus & Corbin, 1990), which will be described in more detail later in this Chapter.

Phases of inquiry

This research project was approved by the University of Kansas Human Subjects Committee in June, 2017. It was proposed and approved by the dissertation committee on August 17, 2017. Immediately following this approval, the research process began. For the purposes of this proposal, there were five phases to the project. Table 2 provides an overview and quick reference of the phases of inquiry. Each phase is addressed in the body of this section.

Phase 1: Study design and planning. After confirming the membership of my dissertation committee in February 2017, I began preliminary conversations with the project partner in order to learn more about their programs and mission and to explore the possibilities of a collaborative research project. As I explored these options, I also explored options with other agencies and had regular conversations with consultants and my dissertation chairperson regarding the development of this research. Throughout March 2017 and May 2017, I reviewed

literature and drafted a rationale, literature review, and methods for the proposed study. During this time I had regular discussions with several committee members and consultants to hone in on a realistic and pertinent topic. Through regular conversations with the immigration coordinator of the Project Partner, I crafted a research proposal that was of mutual interest with the project partner. In addition, I applied for research grants to assist with funding this research. These funding sources are listed in the acknowledgments for this dissertation.

Phase 2: Gaining entry. In June 2017, I obtained a formal letter of support from the project partner (see Appendix A) and submitted my proposed research to the Human Subjects Committee at the University of Kansas for consideration. My proposal defense and subsequent approval was in August 2017. On August 30, 2017, I enrolled as a participant in a Learning Delegation with the project partner. In September, 2017, I conducted two pilot interviews with simulated respondents in order to draft an interview guide. I also worked on acquiring audio recorders and notebooks, refining interview and observation guides, collecting important documents, consulting with the project partner, and planning for data de-identification and security. Each interview guide or observational guide was reviewed and revised based on feedback from a member of the consultant panel and/or members of the dissertation committee. On October 13, 2017, I sent a letter of introduction and began conversations and building connections with the program facilitators and then started to pursue invitations and informed consent from the research participants.

Phase 3: Data collection. Data collection began on November 1. Pre-interviews with current enrollees began prior to the commencement of the Learning Delegation. The most intense period of data collection was during the Learning Delegation, which ran between November 9-November 17, 2017. During this time, I conducted informal interviews and participant

observation with current enrollees. Following the Learning Delegation, post-learning delegation interviews with current enrollees were conducted between December 6-January 5. Throughout the Fall, I collected relevant documents from the Project Partner related to the Learning Delegation that informed this study. Interviews with Facilitators, Administrators, and Past Enrollees were conducted between January and March, 2017. During this entire process, there was on-going consultation with the participants through clarifying questions, checking with them to make sure I understood their meanings, and asking questions when necessary.

Observational field notes were typed daily and backed up on Dropbox for Business for data security. Recorded interviews with private identifiable information were immediately stored on a secure site (Dropbox for Business) until they were uploaded to the secure site Rev.com for transcription. Transcriptions were organized by number. During March and April, all transcripts were checked for accuracy, noted for emotion, utterances, and or errors, and then de-identified for analysis.

Phase 4: Data reduction, analysis, and synthesis. This phase of the research occurred between April, 2018 and August 2018. During this phase, I coded the data using constant comparative analysis in order to identify concepts, categories, and themes. More details of this process are included in the section on data analysis. It included multiple interactions with the data (both reading and listening) and checking with research participants and the consultant panel on the interpretation of the data. There were four audits (January 24, April 27, October 17, 2018 and February 15, 2019) by the methodologist to check for appropriate and transparent procedures. In addition, consultation with the co-methodologist occurred during the data analysis procedures.

Phase 5: Writing and dissemination of findings. Between July, 2018 and January, 2019, I worked on writing findings. This included intensive dissertation writing, consultation with committee members, the consultant panel, and the project partner. An executive summary will be written and shared with the project partner after the dissertation defense and approval by the dissertation chairperson. This executive summary will be carefully de-identified in order to protect my research participants. Finally, I will present my findings to the dissertation committee for approval. After approval, I will develop my findings into formats for publication in social work peer-reviewed journals, presentations at social work or migration related conferences, and reports to relevant stakeholders and community groups.

Table 2: Phases of Inquiry

Phase 1	March 2017- August 2017	Study design & planning	Write rationale, literature, and method. Proposal defense Regular conversations with project partner regarding research plans and potential concerns
Phase 2	June 2017- November 2017	Gaining entry	Obtain letter of support from project partner. Initiation of invitation and informed consent procedures Review data collection forms (interview and observation guides) with consultant panel. Begin document review. IRB application/approval Observations of interactions between the project partner and LD participants Rapport & trustbuilding with Learning Delegation participants Audit
Phase 3	August, 2017- February, 2018	Data collection	Interviews Observational field notes Secure back-up and document storage Collection of documents

			Transcription of interviews Audit
Phase 4	April, 2018-July 2018	Data reduction, analysis, and synthesis	Identifying concepts and categories Development of tentative case themes Development of coding guide(s) Multiple interactions with the data (reading and listening) Coding of all data sources Completing analysis and synthesis of findings Consultation with consultant panel Audit
Phase 5	August, 2018-May, 2019	Writing and dissemination of findings	Development of report, including write-up of findings and illustrative quotes/story segments, and implications Consultation with consultant panel Final Dissertation defense Executive summary to the project partner.

Researcher Qualifications

I have completed all of my coursework toward a doctorate in social welfare, which included course work in qualitative methods, social work theory, transformative learning, history/philosophy of social work, international social work, and feminist research methods. I have a bachelor's degree in peace studies and international development and a master's degree in social work (interpersonal practice and community organization). I have international practice experience related to migration and other social work experience with marginalized populations. I have published several scholarly articles related to migration, social work theory, mental health, and religious perspectives in social work (Chappell Deckert, 2016; Chappell Deckert & Canda, 2016; Chappell Deckert & Statz-Hill, 2016; Chappell Deckert & Koenig, 2017). I also worked under the supervision of a highly qualified, multi-disciplinary dissertation committee.

With regard to experiences related to Learning Delegations, I have studied abroad for courses or travel delegations five times. In addition, I have twice lived in Mexico and Colombia for extended periods of time. Therefore, I have developed competent language skills in Spanish. I am familiar with a variety of different organizations that provide these programs. I relate to the population that is being studied as I am a member of a small, Midwestern church congregation. This provides me an understanding of the population and can assist with understanding cultural norms and negotiating access. I evaluated the unique perspectives of the participants that may differ from my own (Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hundt, 2008). I conducted careful self-reflection and self-analysis, and discussed my experiences and perceptions with my dissertation chair, peers, and the consultant panel (Padgett, Mathew & Conte, 2004). I was a participant observer, which means that my interactions with other participants shaped the data that was gleaned from the inquiry. It is possible that my own reflections and prior knowledge influenced the current enrollees, because of the particular questions I asked. As I am aware of this, I tried to be a listener first and a participant second. However, knowledge production was an iterative process and involved the participants in relationship to me. In this way, the “frameworks of meaning will emerge from ‘the doing’ rather than [only] the knowing” (Shope, 2006, p. 180). Reflexivity kept me closely tied to my own social location and provided humility in the process of data collection and analysis. Reinharz (1992) wrote, “a feminist researcher is one who grounds herself in two worlds” (p.150). This project required that I understand my positionality while potentially engaging with those with whom I may disagree (Charmaz, 2016), and manage the tension or discomfort that may arise. I needed to bridge the two worlds by maintaining a reflective and vigilant attention to the research process. My reflections were documented in field notes and a reflexive journal to support of the trustworthiness of the study.

Data Collection

For this study, I collected original qualitative data from the participants related to the Learning Delegation and from the sponsoring nonprofit organization that is the project partner (i.e. current enrollees, past enrollees, facilitators/administrators), reviewed documents from the Project Partner, and participated and observes in organizational meetings for the Project Partner. I used a naturalistic and responsive framework for data collection (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). All data collection was coordinated and organized by me. During interviews, participants interpreted and recounted their experiences through their own lenses. During the interviews, I asked them what parts of their life experiences may have shaped their views about migration. My role was to participate, listen, and observe.

As a participant researcher, I was involved in all the activities of the Learning Delegation as a part of data collection. The Learning Delegation I attended was already fully planned and organized by a nonprofit organization. In order to preserve anonymity of the organization and confidentiality of research participants, this Learning Delegation will be described only in general terms.

As a participant research, I entered into this experience without any control or input on the Learning Delegation content or programing. For five days, Learning Delegation enrollees were exposed to on-site, experiential immersion that includes daily activities, conversations, and programming related to understanding migrant experiences on and around the border region. Enrollees visited non-profit organizations that attend to migrant needs and/or provide advocacy services, visited with Border Patrol Agents, and visited with key sites related to migration (i.e. morgue, cemetery, port of entry, different forms of the wall, etc). Activities occurred on both

sides of the border. Because the Learning Delegations are usually short, daily schedules were full, often beginning at 7 AM and ending in the evening around 9 PM.

All activities related to the Learning Delegation (LD) were designed by the project partner and implemented by the immigration coordinator for the project partner. LD participants spent the majority of their time together during the Learning Delegation interacting with people who have experienced migration themselves or who are in a role responding to migrants in the area. Research participants for this study included current and past enrollees in Learning Delegations conducted by the project partner and facilitators and administrators for the Learning Delegation. People who provide support, education, or training for the Learning Delegations were not included as formal participants as initially proposed. This change occurred in consultation with the Consultant Panel after the Learning Delegation after discovering that another researcher is working on a related project and the informants would have been overwhelmed with interviews. During a meeting with Learning Delegation administrators and facilitators, two people recommended that I not pursue this particular question. I reached out to the principle investigator of that study but did not get much information. Additionally, it is difficult for a white, North American researcher to come in once and collect accurate information without an extended period of relationship and trust building. As an alternative, questions about the local collaborators were posed to the Learning Delegation facilitators and administrators.

The immigration education coordinator introduced me to the Learning Delegation facilitators, and I requested permission to contact the current enrollees. The program facilitators agreed to send an information letter to the enrollees and invited them to contact me if they were interested in participating in the study. After I did not hear back from many participants, I contacted the facilitator a second time, and he agreed that I could send out an email reminder.

This resulted in all five of the registered enrollees agreeing to talk with me about the study. Prior to the Learning Delegation, I made contact with participants, and with their consent I explored their rationale for participation, their expectations of the delegation, and their views on migration. During the delegation, I collected field notes (written and audio recorded) as a participant observer and explored participant reactions and contextual nuances of the intervention. After the Learning Delegation was finished, I made contact with participants via telephone in order to get reflections from them about their experiences. Throughout this process, I worked closely with the immigration education coordinator of the project partner in order to gain access to participants and relevant documents that were included in the data. There was regular, on-going communication and coordination with the project partner. A de-identified letter of support is attached in Appendix A.

Participant recruitment. I used purposive sampling for this study so that participants could be included who could provide the information and insights into the Learning Delegation (Padgett, 2016). These multiple perspectives (current and past enrollees, facilitators and administrators) from the Learning Delegation were compared and contrasted to provide depth and breadth in the understanding of the case (Yin, 2013).

The immigration education coordinator for the project partner agreed to collaborate with the research for this study (See Appendix A). The project partner provided access to all of the research participants who informed this study. The coordinator also provided contact information (telephone and e-mail) to me, and I contacted them with information about the study. All potential participants were invited to participate in the study as an agreement separate from their agreement to participate in the Learning Delegation. An invitation script guided all invitations, whether made on the phone or over email (See Appendix B). Current enrollees were emailed an

invitation and then contacted by phone. Past enrollees (those who had participated within the last two years) were invited via email. The immigration education coordinator also provided me with the names and contact information for anyone who had facilitated a Learning Delegation or who was considered an administrator for the program. They were also invited to participate by email.

All enrollees in the Learning Delegation agreed to participate in the study. In order to protect the identity of the research participants, the immigration education coordinator was not informed about who did or did not choose to participate. Any report given to the program organizers will be an executive summary of main insights and findings and will not include any personally identifying information about participants.

Participants for this study were purposively selected according to their already established involvement in a Learning Delegation. All participants in this study are adults who have a formal connection to the Learning Delegation currently or in the past 12-24 months (n=19). Research participants included (a) Those who are currently enrolled in the Learning Delegation (n=5); (b) Those who were enrolled in the Learning Delegation within the past 12-24 months (n=6); and (c) Facilitators and administrators of the Learning Delegation (n=8).

Enrolled members of the Learning Delegation (November, 2017) and Learning Delegation alumni (enrolled in the past 12-24 months) were invited to participate in semi-structured formal individual interviews. Current enrollees were interviewed prior to their participation in the Learning Delegation and after their Learning Delegation. Program facilitators and administrators were invited to participate in formal semi-structured interviews. Anyone involved in this program who met the selection criteria (current or past enrollee, facilitator or administrator in a Learning Delegation with the Project Partner to the border of the United States

and Mexico) was invited to participate in the study regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, citizenship status, or other demographic factors. Specific demographic information about the participants is outlined in Chapter 4.

Data collection methods. Multiple perspectives across the data provided a detailed description regarding the Learning Delegation as a case study (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Yin, 2013). All points of view were considered in order to create a holistic description of the experience (See Figure 3). Three methods of data collection informed this study, including participant observation, interviews (formal and informal), and document review. Data for this study was collected through both formal (interviews, document review, participant observation) and informal (debriefing and discussion during the Learning Delegation) channels, with clear documentation and transparent organization. Multiple types of data and triangulation between types of data ensured that a broad understanding of the case is developed (Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hunddt, 2008). A list of the types of data and volume of data is included in Appendix H.

Each of the data methods and the collection procedures will be outlined in the following section. Figure 3 provides a graphic image of the data that was collected. Specific details of this data regarding the number of interview, documents, or hours of observation are documented in Appendix H.



Figure 3: Data sources for the study.

Participant observation. Observational field notes documented firsthand knowledge regarding the way people interacted and behaved on the Learning Delegation. Oral consent for participant observation was pursued and recorded with the group at the beginning of the Learning Delegation, and those who wished to decline their participation were given the opportunity to do so (see oral consent procedures in Appendix C). With consent of all involved, I collected observational notes before, during, and after meetings on the Learning Delegation, during transitions and informal discussions regarding participant reactions to all of the content on or related to the Learning Delegation. Both headnotes (direct notes and impressions) and field notes (more complete record of contextual details) (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) were kept. I wrote headnotes by hand in notebooks, and I typed field notes on the password-protected computer and save in a Microsoft Word file. Back-up copies were stored on Dropbox for

Business daily in case original notes were lost. Notes included content from educational sessions, contextual information, and general reactions from the participants. However, no personal identifiable information was retained in the notes. Field notes were logged daily. An observational guide was developed in consultation with my methodologist; a draft is attached in Appendix D.

Interviews. This study included informal and formal semi-structured interviews. The benefits of interviews in research are that they help foster connection, reflection, disclosure, intimacy, and emergence of insights (Charmaz, 2016). During all interviews, I used a friendly and supportive stance and was flexible in the flow of questions while generally following the interview guide, making sure that all topics are covered in the case of semi-structured interviews. Rubin & Rubin (2011) advocate for a give-and-take style of interview in qualitative research, so that the research participants feel comfortable in a trusting relationship with the researcher. I used emergent listening, which is “listening with all senses” (Davis, 2016, p. 73). I worked toward a fully attuned and empathic approach in all of my interviews (Josselson, 2013). Each participant in this study was offered multiple interview opportunities or alternative ways to provide information to allow for flexibility and readiness in response. Two different kinds of interviews occurred in this study: formal and informal.

Formal interviews. Formal interviews occurred only with written consent (Appendix E). With consent, the different research participants were interviewed as follows:

- Those who are currently enrolled in the Learning Delegation (2 interviews of about 30-70 minutes each conducted in a private setting on the phone), about their experiences on the Learning Delegation. The first interview was shorter and asked about general perceptions and expectations of the Learning Delegation. The second interview occurred

several weeks after the Learning Delegation by phone and asked about general reactions and reflections of their experience. All interviews were semi-structured and followed the interview guide in Appendix F1 and F2. Follow-up member checking occurred during the process of the Learning Delegation and after with the immigration coordinator of the Project Partner.

- Those who were enrolled in the Learning Delegation within the past 12-24 months (1 interview of 60-90 minutes) about their experiences on the Learning Delegation. These interviews were retrospective, so they asked for reflection and reactions to the Learning Delegation. These interviews were semi-structured and followed the interview guide in Appendix F-3.
- Facilitators and administrators of the Learning Delegation (1 interview of 60-90 minutes) about their goals and expectations for the Learning Delegation related to mission and purpose, and experiences/reflections about the Learning Delegations. These interviews occurred after the Learning Delegation. They followed a semi-structured interview guide which is in Appendix F-4.

All formal interviews followed an interview guide, which was designed with the participants' role in mind and developed in consultation with the methodologist. However, interview guides were adapted and flexible based on the participant feedback. All interviews were de-identified and transcribed by Rev.com and de-identified. Each respondent was assigned a participant number and later a pseudonym.

Informal interviews. For informal interviews, I used an oral consent form (Appendix B). These interviews occurred in more spontaneous moments and during debriefing during the Learning Delegation. A flexible guide of potential questions was developed in consultation with

the methodologist. General themes for informal interviews are included in Appendix G. However, the flow of conversation occurred in a more natural manner and the questions posed by the program facilitators during the reflection and debrief times allotted on the Learning Delegation served as natural prompts for discussion and debriefing. Instead of being married to my predetermined questions, I followed the participants' lead regarding conversation topics and reactions during the Learning Delegation. Prior to any conversation that was recorded by audio recorder or by note-taking, I confirmed with the participants that they give consent for the interview. On one or two occasions there was a request to turn off the recorder, and I complied with this request.

Document review. I reviewed twelve documents that inform the Learning Delegation including (but not limited to): agendas of planned Learning Delegations, printed agency materials, press releases, existing program evaluations and/or reflections of participants. Access to these documents were provided by the immigration education coordinator and collected during the Learning Delegation. These documents provided contextual information that gives a broad understanding of the purpose, mission, and activities for the Learning Delegation.

Data analysis

The goal of data analysis in case study research is to get thick case description and to reveal case themes that illustrate the Learning Delegation and its potential influences on participants' views of migration. The data from this study were analyzed using constant comparative analysis, as adapted by Lincoln & Guba (1985) from grounded theory for use in constructivist or naturalistic inquiry.

Preparation for coding. The first step in analysis was preparation for coding during the process of data collection when I listened deeply and made notes about potential themes and

noteworthy ideas that come from the data. This occurred during the process of interviews on the Learning Delegations and also after formal interviews (which were recorded). The second step of preparation involved the transcription of the interview and a diligent review of the transcriptions, field notes, and documents for a general exploration of themes and patterns (Patton, 2002). All formal interviews were transcribed from Rev.com, but completely reviewed and de-identified by myself. From this review, general patterns or themes were noted in order to get the main broad patterns in the data.

Constant comparative analysis. Constant comparative analysis begins with open coding of the data to look for themes followed by more detailed and systematic coding and synthesis of the data. As I coded the data, I kept notes with particular comments, questions, thoughts, or decisions that were made in order to better track coding decisions that are made in the moment and review them with my co-methodologists and/or consultants. Charmaz (2004) and Hesse-Biber, (2010) encourage the use of memos during coding, so that particular coding decisions can be followed. These themes were then compared within and between participant types to look for patterns and understandings about the case as a whole. I used an iterative process of coding. After initial coding, there was a repeated review of the data by theme for more focused and interpretive coding and interpretation (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Four coding guides were developed between April and September, 2018

The analysis process was both deductive and inductive. In the beginning stages of the analysis, I was looking for themes that were informed by the literature, my prior experience/knowledge, and by a feminist social justice lens. However, in the latter states of data analysis, I emphasized open inductive coding. This approach is compatible with critical theory and allows for flexibility and neutrality in the analysis process (Padgett, 2016). This kind of

coding required a close engagement with the data and coding that is “embodied” and engaged while they search for meaning across case themes (Charmaz, 2016, p. 49). The coding connects the researcher to the underlying stories and meanings found in the data. This included a “naïve immersion in the data,” which emphasized understanding that comes directly from the participants over pre-determined theories or suppositions (Padgett, 2016, p. 141).

Specific data analysis strategy. Appendix I outlines the data analysis strategy that was used after preparations were complete. First, initial coding was used. Five randomly selected formal interview transcripts were coded using open coding. A tentative coding guide was developed from these themes, and then refined through the application of this guide across multiple data sources. Following consultation regarding themes and codes, several revisions to the coding guide were made. Second, 41 documents were coded and yielded 1661 total codes. Additional consultation with the methodologists and peer scholars were made. Third, illustrative quotes from the data were arranged by document families and considered by volume. Then there was another analysis by code for subthemes and categories, which were compared by respondent types. Documents were also analyzed for themes and those themes were then incorporated into the broader case study analysis by comparing and contrasting those themes with other data is collected during the course of the Learning Delegation. Some documents were systematically reviewed while others provided supplemental material and context about the Learning Delegation. Finally, I used ATLAS.ti, which is a Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) for a detailed analysis. During analysis, I used pattern matching (looking for patterns in case themes), explanation building (consider any interpretation of the experiences of the participants), triangulation (comparing case themes across participants and data sources), and negative case analysis (looking for case themes that contradict patterns in the analysis) and

transduction (engagement in the data that includes creativity, intuition, and the whole-person). (Canda, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Yin, 2013). Finally, I synthesized the data across different sources and respondents, and typed up findings that highlighted key nuggets or quotes from the data.

All phases of data analysis were completed in consultation with the chair/methodologist, who also conducted four audits: (a) Early in the stage of data collection; (b) During the middle of data collection and early analysis; (c) During the process of identifying tentative findings, And (d) At the very end of the write-up. Every stage of the research was open to audit. Specific audit trail documents are outlined in Appendix H. The process of analysis and synthesis that I followed is outlined in Appendix I. A co-methodologist met with me in the middle of the analysis to review initial findings and discuss organization and analysis strategies with me.

Trustworthiness of the Research

For this study, I considered procedures to support trustworthiness and rigor of the research process and to provide assurance that the research is an appropriate representation of the participants' perceptions. I used the qualitative criteria commonly advocated by research scholars, including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, authenticity, and integrity (Canda, 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). Each criterion was viewed through the lens of feminist social justice research, and will be discussed in the following section.

Credibility. Credibility involves the realistic and undistorted presentation of views based on the participants' views in the research (Canda, 2016). I was careful to interact with different participants who are informed about the phenomena. I checked for consistency and difference across data sources. I took extra effort to check for clarification in interviews and extra care for following the research plan (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I paid close attention to verbal, non-verbal,

and contextual factors that can shape the research. I have no pretenses of objectivity, but this was considered through persistent observation, debriefing with research participants through member checking during interviews, negative case analysis (looking for insights that are incongruent or stand out as different than others) and reviewing data for interpretation checks (keeping memos where there are interpretation questions and checking in with my co-methodologists and/or Consultant Panel). I included direct comments and responses from my research participants to illustrate research findings. I conducted careful self-reflection and self-analysis in a reflexive journal and discussed these issues with consultants (Padgett, Mathew & Conte, 2004) and/of my dissertation chairperson. All of these strategies boost the credibility of this study (Yin, 2013).

Transferability. Because of the specific context of this study and the small sample size, findings from this study will not be generalized to a larger population. Instead, the study provides a rich description of the Learning Delegation case. It explores the experiences of the people involved in the Learning Delegation and compares experiences and perspectives across the case to draw conclusions about it. The methods used to meet this criteria include thick descriptions (that use multiple perspectives and sources), consideration of relevance to critical social work and feminist social justice research (Dominelli, 2010; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008; Reid, 2004), making connections to prior theoretical and empirical research (see Chapter 2), and developing implications and recommendations that are useful to enhancing Learning Delegations and applicable in a variety of social work and related settings (practice, education, research). This research informs social work practitioners and educators about potential ways to shape interventions regarding public perceptions about migration.

Dependability. Dependability refers to ensuring consistency when conducting research in natural settings where conditions may be inconsistent or unpredictable. For the purposes of

this study, a research protocol and methodological log were used so that all decisions made during the process of the research can be reviewed or scrutinized by outside members. I took careful notes throughout the entire research process and kept an audit trail (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). I recorded all formal interviews and listened to the recordings multiple times. Some informal interviews were also recorded to provide consistency between hand written head notes and input on the Learning Delegation. Four audits of the audit trail during three different distinct phases of the research were completed under the supervision of the methodologist. A complete record of audit materials is included in Appendix H.

Confirmability. Confirmability is the criterion that ensures that findings can be connected in a trail directly back to the data (Canda, 2016). For case study analysis, confirmability is verified by the use of multiple data sources, connecting evidence within and between cases, and using key informants to check the analysis and findings (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010; Yin, 2013). For this study, there are three sources of data: observation field notes, interviews, and documents. In addition to the variety provided by these sources of data, there were informants from multiple perspectives involved with the Learning Delegation. This helped confirm that the findings are congruent with the experiences of the participants on the Learning Delegation and on previous Learning Delegations. I used member checking for each of the participants in the Learning Delegation and the immigration education coordinator from the project partner during the interviews and after the interviews if there was a need to check for clarification and/or interpretation. The four audits ensured organization of research products. The fourth also traces a selection of findings back to data sources.

Authenticity. Authenticity is a criterion that includes a researcher's openness to the perspectives of others and their reflexivity in the research process. Within a feminist social

justice research framework, a participatory construction of knowledge can itself lead to new understandings and insights generated by the research process. Therefore, I made efforts to listen carefully and check for understanding in the process of data collection and analysis. I kept a reflective log, which included my reactions and thoughts regarding both content and process throughout the research process. I also worked closely with the immigration education coordinator, the consultant panel, and the dissertation chairperson and methodologist in order to check my understandings and interpretations with them. An executive summary of the research will be shared with stakeholders and advocates who want to be purposeful in their use of research findings to create social change (Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008) or develop programs to build awareness and advocacy around migration and social inclusion.

Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the University of Kansas Institutional Review Board (IRB) on June 21, 2017. Most participants in this study are North Americans who speak English. Special populations include those from Mexico or near the border between Mexico and the United States who may or may not speak English as a first language. I am competent in Spanish and comfortable with comprehension and basic communication as needed. However, all data could be collected in English. If some people preferred to interact in Spanish, I was comfortable doing so. There were only a couple incidents where a respondent felt more comfortable using one word or phrase in Spanish to illustrate what they were thinking or feeling.

Any and all private identifiable personal information from this inquiry was de-identified and reported in a manner that protects the privacy and identity of the informant. No personal identifiable information was included in transcripts or any form of research report. However, enrolled members of the Learning Delegation may choose to self-identify after their experience,

which could include making a connection to their experience through the publicized report from this research.

I used discretion when interviewing Learning Delegation participants. Interviews were conducted with adults who are fully capable of providing consent and understand the research procedures. Participation in this study was strictly voluntary, and no compensation was given in exchange for participation. All research activities were transparent and explained to the participants. This study did not include deception in any form. All ethical considerations were discussed in detail with the chair of my dissertation committee, and potentially with other committee members for consultation and review.

The informed consent for this study (Appendix E) outlines research procedures, potential risks and benefits to the participants, confidentiality, and the processes and contact information necessary in order to withdraw consent. All research procedures were explained in detail to the participants prior to any collection of data.

Part 2: Findings & Implications

Chapter Four: The Learning Delegation

One of the things that I'd really like to try to make sure it happens is that people who live on the border are humanized. That people see migrants as human beings that have families and kids, and are not just in this category of being a migrant or an immigrant. And that Border Patrol are people who have families and dreams and who do a difficult, and sometimes obscene job, but are human beings. We really try to humanize the people who are here, because that just doesn't happen in the media and in what people tend to hear before they come down here [John (F/A)].

The opening quote for this Chapter illustrates one facilitator/administrator's hope for the Learning Delegation and serves to frame the synthesis of the data related to the Learning Delegation. The presentation of findings is divided into four Chapters. Chapter 4 addresses the nature of the Learning Delegation including a full description of the philosophy and mission of the Project Partner and activities related to the Learning Delegation curriculum itself. It also includes a description of the study participants and data sources, including their background experiences. Chapter 5 follows with a more detailed description of participants' experiences with the Learning Delegation based on data that was collected before (review of documents/planning, formal interviews) during (participant observation and group processing/reflection time), and after (formal interviews, participant observation, and evaluations) the Learning Delegation. Chapter 6 then moves into the activities and strategies that were implemented on the Learning Delegation that may have influenced an enrollee's shift of perspectives or actions related to migration (as indicated by participant observation and formal interviews). Chapter 7 then gives an overview of the ways in which study participants described their perceptions about migration and any shift or change in their attitudes or actions related to migration.

It is important to note that the guiding research questions were considered during analysis in addition to an inductive process of discovering additional insights. Therefore, the findings are not organized solely by question, but rather they account for both deductive and inductive responses. The interaction of deductive and inductive analysis procedures and the Chapters that correspond to the findings are outlined in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

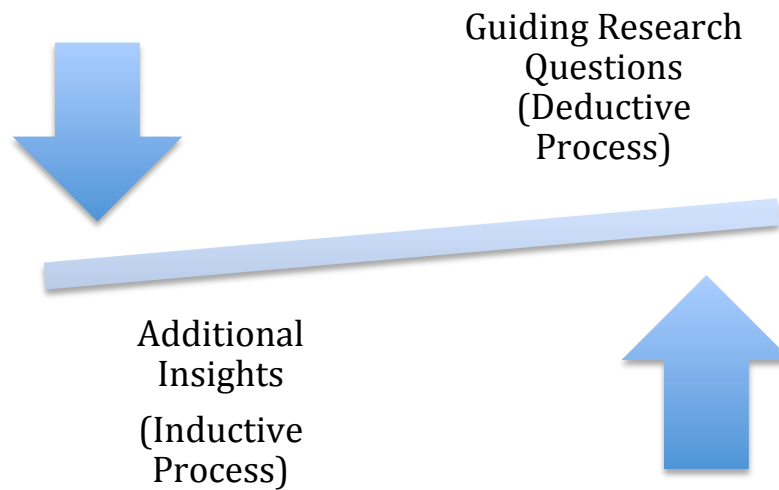


Figure 4: Interaction of deductive and inductive analysis procedures

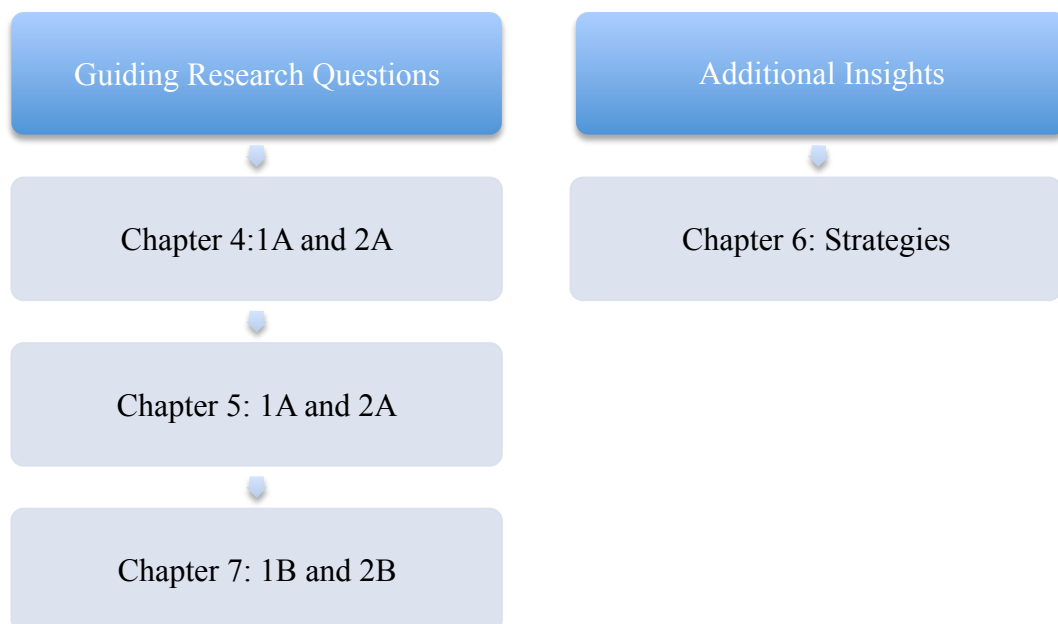


Figure 5: Chapters that correspond to guiding research questions

Quotes and ideas from the participants in this study will be identified with the following language: “study participants” or “participants” refer to any people who provided any kind of data (i.e. based on interviews or observations) that contributed to this inquiry; “enrollees” refer to any person who was an official enrollee in a Learning Delegation (past or current); “facilitators/administrators” refers to any person who is a formal facilitator or administrator, hired or volunteer, for the project partner. When “enrollees” is used without an indication of past or current, it means there was not a distinction between those respondents. Facilitators and administrators are combined because the number of administrators was so minimal and some facilitators also did administrative work.

In the presentation of these findings and the subsequent discussion, some specific numbers of respondents who shared a perspective are used as a way to indicate the prevalence of the theme or perspective. At other times, descriptors such as “some,” “all,” or “many” are used to give a general sense of the prevalence of the response (i.e. all enrollees). For example, “some” refers 2-5 participants. In all the presentation of the findings, participants were given a pseudonym in order to protect their identity. All quotes are followed by a pair of letters that indicate the source of the information: CE is current enrollee; PE is past enrollee; F/A is facilitator/administrator; FN is field notes; R is participant reflections; D is project partner documents.

Description of the Learning Delegation

Learning Delegations sponsored by the Project Partner usually last 5-10 days. They have the purpose of prompting new understandings, awareness, or action related to migration issues amongst faith-based groups in the United States. The project partner also offers south-to-south learning delegations, where people from Central and South America go to another part of the

continent to learn about migration. However, the majority of learning delegations are people from the Northern part of North America going to learn in the Southern part of North America. Participants can speak English or Spanish as a first language, and interpreters are provided to help with interpretation for those local partners who only speak one language. Sometimes that interpreter is also the facilitator, and some times it is a separate person or an enrollee who happens to be fluent in both English and Spanish.

History of the Learning Delegation. The idea for Learning Delegations began in the 1980 and 1990s when,

...Central American churches and other [name of Project Partner] partners expressed concern that North Americans were often receiving a severely distorted picture of the political, social, and economic realities they faced. Since North American foreign policy (especially that of the United States) was having a dramatic negative impact on the safety and well-being of those in the region, [the project partner] coordinated multiple learning delegations in the region in an attempt to expose constituency to a truer picture of the situation and to encourage churches in the North to mobilize in opposition to such damaging foreign policy (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002 p. 16).

The Learning Delegation to the border evolved out of a collaborative conversation between a retired pastor and a migrant who both wanted to increase education and awareness about the border. They met and began these conversations on a Peace and Justice Learning Delegation sponsored by the Project Partner. When it started they just wanted to bring more public awareness to the border region but now they consider it very central to their work [Barbara (F/A)]. In the beginning only individuals and very small groups came, but as the news of the opportunity spread, more and more groups requested a Learning Delegation. Currently, the

Project Partner does not do very much advertising or outreach for recruitment because there is always demand for participation. There is heightened interest when there are increased crossings or political attention to the border. All Learning Delegations are approved through an administrative process in order to ensure that there is not too much overlap in scheduling. Due to small numbers of staff, the facilitators made connections with existing local partners on the border in order to expand their program options and provide a broad range of perspectives related to migration.

Learning delegations to the border of the United States and Mexico sponsored by the Project Partner occur 3-5 times per year. Usually, there are 5-20 enrollees on each one. There is a Project Partner facilitator and sometimes a group leader (such as a professor with a school group or a pastor with a church group). The facilitator arranges the daily activities for the Learning Delegation, in consultation with the local partners. They also arrange for transportation, housing, and food for the Learning Delegation. They facilitate reflection and debriefing discussions. They also attend to any other logistic considerations in the Learning Delegation. The group leader assists with some of these tasks and also recruits and cares for the direct needs of the Learning Delegation participants. After the Learning Delegation, the group leader may help with follow-up actions or local educational efforts.

Because of the religious nature of the Project Partner, participants on the learning delegations tend to have some degree of involvement or interest of a religious nature (i.e. membership in a church congregation and interest or work in migration issues) though degrees of religiosity and spirituality vary among the group members. Learning Delegations are hosted by a variety of religious groups, but this Project Partner primarily hosts Christian groups. Particular goals for the learning delegations are somewhat catered to each group, depending on their

interests and needs. For example, some groups are formed with the particular focus of bringing together people who are professionals in the field of migration or involved in migration advocacy already. Another example is a group of artists that formed to generate more creative responses to migration advocacy. Groups stay in a town on the border, either on the US or Mexico side, and cross back and forth to visit various organizations related to migration and support of migrant populations.

Values & mission of the Learning Delegation. The project partner has a statement in their manual for Learning Delegations that states that they “...serve as a channel for interchange by building relationships that are mutually transformative” (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002, p. 13). They have four stated objectives for these kind of exchanges, including the following:

- (a) Solidarity: encouraging commitment to the global church among constituency and partner congregations;
- (b) Relationships: Improving the quality of direct, cross-boundary connections;
- (c) Education: Providing the space and tools for mutual learning and sharing about faith and human need; and
- (d) Transformation: Fostering personal and systemic change as a way to create a more just, humane, sustainable, and peaceful world. (Project Partner, 2002, p. 14).

These objectives are set within a theoretical frame that includes transformative education, Freire’s conscientization, liberation theology and the hermeneutic circle, and pedagogies for the non-poor (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002, pp. 7-4-7-7). Freire’s conscientization focuses on a process that uses lived experience and dialogue to motivate people toward action. “...people learn together about social, political, economic, and cultural problems and then take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002,

p. 7-5). Liberation theologian Juan Luis Segundo developed a process of reflection and interpretation for theological insights called the hermeneutic circle, which uses praxis (or faith in action) to highlight and emphasize the voices of oppressed people. The Project Partner recognizes that most participants on Learning Delegations come from the middle class: “Most fall into the middle class. They are not the most powerful in society. Neither are they engaged in a daily struggle to survive (Project Partner, 2002, p. 7-7). Therefore, they specifically implemented strategies (rooted in Friere and Evans) to spark transformative education for those who were not poor themselves.

Activities on the Learning Delegation. For the purpose of this research, the organizations that collaborate with the Project Partner on the border are called “local partners.” Examples of these local partners include a resource center for migrants, the border patrol, a drug and alcohol treatment center, micro businesses or enterprises that exist for the purposes of addressing migration, and religious organizations that provide relief, provide public awareness, or foster constructive relationships among different populations on the border. The delegations visit a wide range of these partners. In addition, activities are planned in order to help enrollees understand the context of US-Mexico migration including a visit to a cemetery or morgue where bodies of migrants are identified, putting jugs of water out in the desert for migrants to use, observing detention hearings, getting a border infrastructure tour, sitting in a town square eating local delicacies, participating in a vigil for those who have died on the border, or listening to a concert or artistic event that is taking place at the border.

Roles in the Learning Delegation. There are several roles involved in the Learning Delegation.

Roles of facilitators. Roles of the facilitators have been quite flexible, depending on the needs of the group and the leadership that already exists within the group. They can be drivers, interpreters, facilitators, tour guides, cooks, budgeters, teachers, and counselors. They also work to keep a balanced schedule and to make sure the local partners do not feel exploited. A couple facilitators recognized that their ethnicity and competence in two languages was helpful in their role as Learning Delegation facilitators.

Facilitators mentioned that their jobs can be demanding, and keeping a balance between the Learning Delegation work and other work can sometimes be tricky. They also mentioned that it is sometimes difficult to separate their work and their home life. There was also recognition that perhaps the facilitators play too many roles and they need a second person to help with some of the organizational or logistical tasks.

Role of administrators. The role of the administrator is to approve the Learning Delegation proposal. This includes a review of the location and budget for the proposed Learning Delegation. They also may serve as a referral link to the facilitators, if they are approached by a group who wants to go on a Learning Delegation and they do not know a facilitator. They also work on recruitment, funding, and coordinate the training manuals and updates for the Learning delegations.

Role of the local partners. Local partners provide the key insights and information regarding migration issues at the border. They each have separate agreements with the Project Partner and can cater their presentations and activities to the needs of the group. The local partners are usually compensated for their work.

Role of the enrollee. The enrollee in a Learning Delegation is asked to participate in all of the planned activities of the Learning Delegation. They are also asked to conduct some kind of action or educational event after they are finished with the Learning Delegation.

While each participant was interviewed under the assumption of one of these roles, several had experience in several roles. For example, there was an enrollee who had also been a facilitator or a facilitator who was also an administrator. The fact that they had dual roles may or may not have impacted their decision about how much to participate. For example, one participant said, “I think I felt more reserved to let everyone else speak up...I don’t think I wanted to be necessarily the first to share my opinion...I didn’t feel like the main participant if that makes sense” [Wendy (CE)]. This may have inhibited her participation as an enrollee.

Participants’ Characteristics

This case study included formal and informal interviews with enrollees in Learning Delegations as well as interviews with past enrollees and facilitators and administrators. I was also a participant in the Learning Delegation.

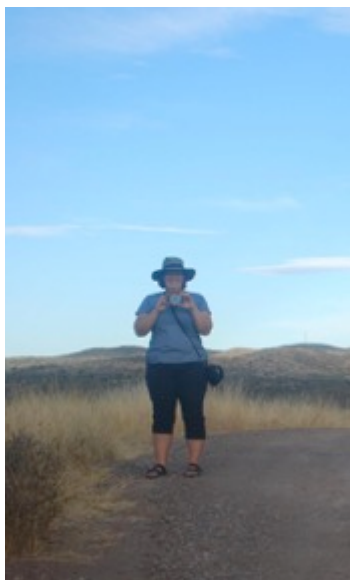


Figure 6: Photograph of me doing fieldwork. Photographed by Ben (CE).

Used with permission.

Eight of the participants had at some point been in multiple roles within the Project Partner (i.e. enrollee and facilitator on a Learning Delegation). Only one administrator had never been on a Learning Delegation themselves. The following findings are derived from these interviews as well as field notes, observations from my own experience on a learning delegation, and document review from the Project Partner.

Demographics. There were 19 participants in this study who engaged in formal interview data. Participants were divided into three categories. Facilitators and administrators were not separated because of the small number of administrators. There were many more who were part of the informal interviews (See Appendix H). Table 3 displays a quick view of the characteristics of these participants.

Table 3: Formal interview participant characteristics

Characteristics	Study Participants
Type of Participant (n=19)	5 Current Enrollees 6 Past Enrollees 8 Facilitators/Administrators

Age	25-72 (Mean=50)
Gender	11 Male 8 Female
Ethnicity	16 White 3 Latinx
Region (Region where they currently live on the North American continent; For example, if dividing the United State into four quadrants, the upper quadrant and through Canada would be “northern”)	12 Northern 2 Western 1 Eastern 4 Southern
Occupation ⁵	6 Pastors 8 Non-profit workers 5 Educators 3 Other
Personal connection to migration experience	5
International travel experience	13 more than 3 countries 4 more than 10 countries
Language	19 English 13 some competency in Spanish
Religion	18 Christian
Immigrant Advocacy	17

Participants ranged in age from 25-72, with an average age of 50. There were 11 male and 8 females. Sixteen identified as white and three as latinx. Twelve lived in the Northern region of North America (including Canada), while two lived in the Western region, one in the Eastern region (as divided by the Mississippi river), and four in the Southern region of North America (including Latin America). Regarding occupation, there were six pastors, eight who worked for a non-profit in some other capacity, five who were trained as educators and three others. Five of these participants had a direct connection to migration experience (either a family member who migrated or a close friend who migrated) while others had solid travel experience (thirteen had

⁵ indicates a number greater than 19 because some people identified with more than one category; A non-profit worker is someone who is employed by an non-profit organization in some capacity.

been to more than three countries; four had been to more than ten countries and many had studied abroad in various capacities). Thirteen participants indicated some competency in Spanish and one in another language. Eighteen indicated membership or participation in a Christian religion and seventeen indicated that they were already involved in immigration advocacy or volunteer work in some capacity.

Background of study participants. Study participants were asked about their background and the ways in which it may or may not impact their experience on a Learning Delegation. With regard to education, six participants mentioned that their educational experiences prompted some kind of interest for them in migration-related issues or a shift in their perspective. For some it was people they met with migration experience in their classes. For others it was studying abroad. One facilitator/administrator reflected on how his experience in graduate school helped shape his perspectives about migration:

...I think that as I went to graduate school, and as I read more I kind of became a little bit more callous toward....my affinity for the U.S. So I think I became more sympathetic towards the migrants, or towards the people that we were visiting” [Mark (F/A)].

So, learning in different contexts contributed to different understandings about migration.

Several participants mentioned their family as influencing their perspective on migration. Some had their own migration experience in their nuclear family and some described childhood experiences that related to their interest in migration. One remembered visiting the border with their family early in their childhood and stated, “I had some positive memories of the place” [John (F/A)]. Mark (another facilitator/administrator) connected his experience with other marginalized populations to his sense of compassion towards migrants:

I was raised in kind of a lower income family. We lived in a mobile home park, and I had a lot of friends that were in even worse situations than I was. So kind of relating to that side of society, I guess...led me to feel more comfortable working in those spaces [Mark (F/A)].

Some participants brought up their use of different languages. They mentioned that language not only gave them access to connections with people, but it also facilitated a more keen awareness about empathy and hospitality. One stated, "...I guess it's something that changed me. Just having an awareness of changing and switching to Spanish when those members, like guests are in the house" [Wendy (CE)]. Another mentioned the burden that is carried by those enrollees who are bilingual because they become informal facilitators during crucial conversations on the Learning Delegation.

Several of the participants described professional and volunteer experiences that gave them direct relationships with migrant populations:

...we've talked about immigration , and policies, and systemic issues, we also have a Spanish-speaking church that meets in the same meeting house as us, and so there's relationships there and certainly in the last year or so...we've become aware of the very personal and present anxiety of people [Ben (CE)].

These relationships helped informed their understanding of migration before they went. Another mentioned their interaction with students who had migration experience: "You learn to know the families...and just hearing some of their stories...it made us interested in looking into this further and seeing what they experienced" [Stephanie (CE)]. So, knowing a little bit in their local context sparked their curiosity to learn more.

Others mentioned that their professional background gave them a different lens on the Learning Delegation. For example one pastor stated, “I was probably a little more theologically reflective, than some people might be. That’s part of the job” [Ben (CE)]. Another reflected that they needed to balance their professional role on the Learning Delegation because they were not there for professional reasons, but instead as a learner. Or, they did not want to jeopardize access to any local partners because of their professional background (i.e. lawyer or journalist). One mentioned that their professional background enhances their participation in Learning Delegations because it “...helps me make sure that I bring in the conversation of how people can get involved in talking to their representatives and senators when they’re going back to do advocacy upon return” [Beth (F/A)]. Some professions are more apt to be involved in advocacy efforts.

Related past experiences. Study participants were also asked to reflect on their past experiences and the ways in which those experiences may have influenced them on the Learning Delegation. The first main area of experience related to prior or simultaneous experience with the Project Partner. Some participants had fulfilled multiple roles with the Project Partner (worked in another capacity or went from a facilitator to an enrollee or enrollee to a facilitator).

Study participants primarily discussed their experiences with migration and other cultural endeavors (i.e. study abroad). Most of them had other experiences and knowledge about different cultures. Seven of those participants had studied abroad in Latin America previously, and one had studied abroad somewhere else. Five had participated in a different Learning Delegation somewhere in Latin America, and three had participated in a Learning Delegation somewhere else. Five of the study participants had lived abroad for one year or longer. These

experiences informed their participation in the learning delegation to the border. One explained that their learning delegation somewhere else had influenced their decision to go to the border:

...[the learning delegation] kind of reinforced something that I wanted to do because that trip....was an eye opening experience to stuff I didn't know about...I was invited to share the stories that I have seen there with people here, so then that also, it helped me to what I was trying to figure out or what to do with the border stories and Learning Delegation. It also helped me to figure out what, how to do it [Alex (F/A)].

and another said "...we did remember those things and remember the kind of things we had seen there [on another Learning Delegation], and how can we do some of the same things" [Barbara F/A]. One facilitator reflected that after their participation in another Learning Delegation they "felt a lot more connected to the work...I could communicate what to expect a bit better...I'm able to suggest what experiences they should try to do" [Mark (F/A)].

Some felt strongly attached to relationships that had formed through past experiences with.... For example, "We really liked the relationship that we found between the various groups of people on both sides of the border...we liked seeing creative folks helping and that kind of thing" [John (F/A)]. These relationships inspired them to go back and get more involved.

These experiences also gave them practice being in a context where things may have been different than they expected. For example, one participant reflected on the use of indigenous languages when they lived abroad: "...my expectation going into it was that...yes, everyone around me would be speaking Spanish, but then they also have this other language...my expectation going into that was just like, very different than the reality" [Wendy (CE)]. Another felt their past experience confirmed that context can complexify knowledge. Ben (a current enrollee) stated, "I very quickly realized that there is no kind of common ground

where everyone of good intentions and moderate views can gather in the middle and agree. There's very little space for agreement that isn't contested. It's very complicated" [Ben (CE)], or simply, "...it just was an eye-opening experience...I've never had that before" [Kate (CE)]. All of these comments indicate some degree of shift in their understandings about particular phenomena.

Others reflected that their experience made them appreciate what they had or aware of their own privilege. One illustrated the feeling that there was much more to learn when they stated the following:

...it felt like the layers of an onion were being peeled back and I could see...there was a sense of there was a story there that was not being heard...and I think that was part of the challenge for me coming back, is to help other people hear it. [Ben (CE)].

Luke, a (facilitator/administrator) reflected about how their past experience living abroad deepened their understanding of social justice issues:

I saw the bomb craters that were there, and the rice patties, and made the connection that this is from a U.S. plane. That is when I really started to feel...the social justice piece I think is when I felt more convictions that this is wrong, and how could we have done this?...It made me angry [Luke (F/A)].

In this quote, the enrollee describes a new perspective that they gained from seeing the impact of the U.S. military on a particular location. One facilitator/administrator reflection related to justice issues was:

...we met people there who had relatives who were citizens who had been deported because they had been born at home with no birth certificates [John (F/A)]...and then...we worked with youth...most of them had professional degrees but couldn't make

any money in Mexico. The jobs just weren't there, so they had moved to the U.S. and were working with out papers, just doing scut work, cleaning hotels and stuff. But they were very afraid to leave the neighborhood, and immigration officers would come and ask for papers of anybody with brown skin when we left church and just sort of the living conditions they had in that area where groceries coming in would be tainted...nobody would complain, because they were scared they'd be deported [John (F/A)].

John was illustrating his growing knowledge of social justice issues related to migration, which he had gained through getting to know the experiences of people in his community with lived experience of migration.

There were some participants who mentioned their own experience with migration. Three study participants worked directly in migration, six study participants worked indirectly or volunteered in the area of migration, and three reported close friendships with someone who had lived experience of migration. Five had lived experience of migration themselves. For one, it related to their influence on a Learning Delegation.

People...hear our story as a success story, because we are in the system now...this is in immigrant who made it, the dream, you know? ...able to make the dream, the American dream. Well the [local] partners, they see us as one of them [Jose (F/A)].

Jose was illustrating the importance of that common experience that may occur between facilitators and local partners. Another participant discussed the richness of having Learning Delegation enrollees and facilitators with lived experience of migration. They said, "This opportunity of exposure, of on the ground, is extremely valuable" [Luisa (PE)]. When there was a connection to a personal experience of migration, they said, "I can see this is my people who are really dying in the desert or being affected by these immigration issues...I take that more

personally, working with them and feel good about it because I'm doing that" [Jose (F/A)]. This quote illustrated the ways in which identifying with a migrant experience made the Learning Delegation come alive.

Several study participants mentioned their experience of hospitality in another country. One was particularly moved by their experience being welcomed into a different culture. They said, "I always felt welcome...they welcomed me. And they'd offer food and tea...I was invited to birthday parties" [Kate (CE)]. They later reflected that they tried to spread the same sentiments in the United States to people from other countries.

All of the details about the background and experiences of the research study inform the ways that they were able to interpret their experience on the Learning Delegation to the US/Mexico border, and the ways in which that experience may or may not have influenced their perspective or behaviors on migration. Study participants were predisposed to have an interest and positive attitude about migration based on their Christian faith background and/or their personal or professional exposure to migrants and migration issues. These prior interests both sparked their interest in the Learning Delegation and also provided them with some presumptions about migration before they went on the Learning Delegation.

Chapter Five: Learning Delegation Reflections: Before, During, and After

In the previous Chapter, I provided an overview of the Learning Delegation as well as a description of the background of the study participants. Chapter 5 primarily addresses the first part of the first research question, which asks how all of the study participants describe their experiences on the Learning Delegation. For organizational purposes, it is arranged into three main areas: before, during, and after the Learning Delegation⁶. Current enrollees, past enrollees, and facilitators and administrators all contributed to these findings.

Description of experiences in anticipation of the Learning Delegation

All research participants were asked about their expectations and/or objectives for the Learning Delegation prior to going (interviews with current enrollees) or before they went (interviews with past enrollees). They indicated their thoughts and feelings in anticipation for the Learning Delegation, described what they hoped would happen, illustrated any preparation they took and/or outlined what they wanted to learn.

Thoughts and feelings in anticipation for the Learning Delegation. Two feelings expressed by the participants were curiosity and confidence. They were curious about refugee and immigration issues in general [Adam (PE)]. One described their desire to “...go with an open mind and gather what information I can or just have a learning experience that is hands-on” [Terry (CE)]. Another described her curiosity in relation to the other participants when she said that she was “interested in...the questions that this group will bring to the places we visit” [Wendy (CE)]. The same participant referred to the local presenters, and was also concerned

⁶ Before the Learning Delegation refers to information they provided that related to their thoughts, feelings, and preparations prior to going on the Learning Delegation. During the Learning Delegation refers to their reflections and thoughts about the experiences they were having while on the Learning Delegation. After the Learning Delegation refers to their reflections and thoughts after they had returned home after the Learning Delegation.

about understanding the “lens that they speak though” [Wendy (CE)]. Another participant simply stated, “I’ll see what I see” [Kate (CE)]. Confidence came through in relationship to the Project Partner as an agency when one participant stated clearly that she felt confident because “it’s sponsored by a group that we trust...” [Stephanie (CE)]

Six participants (current & past enrollees and facilitators/administrators) indicated that they had current or prior professional interests that led them to want to go on the Learning Delegations. These interests ranged from construction, teaching, policy/law, or religious work. One stated, “...working with migrants, I think it’s really beneficial to see where they are coming from, where they have just been before getting to where I work...” [Wendy (CE)]. Another said, “We work with a lot of communities where they’re very affected by forced migration. So, I wanted to understand what they were experiencing during the journey or when they’re in the US or along the border” [Lisa (PE)]. There was a general desire to learn more than the basic knowledge they had about migration.

Other participants had lived experience of migration themselves or in their direct families, and this led them to want to understand the border. For example, two participants were children of migrant farm workers in North America, and they wanted to better understand their family’s history and specifically wanted to understand the context around the border.

Other reasons for going included schoolwork or church-related work (study interests of volunteer work with migrants). Many were encouraged to go by a friend who was a migrant or a friend who had been on a Learning Delegation before. Several people just wanted to experience the realities in the same space as so many migrants had: “...I think for me it’s an opportunity to go in and actually experience right on the ground the realities of relationships there on the border” [Ben (CE)] or “...I find it interesting. I’d like to see what the people that I’ve learned to

know have encountered when they have crossed over” [Kate (CE)]. She cited an Arabic saying that illustrated this feeling: “I need to have the smell of the place.”

Some participants indicated that they purposely wanted to counteract the stories they heard in the media or that they went because of a restrictive attitude towards migrants in the political climate of the 2016 Presidential election:

...I mean you hear a lot of arguments in the news about how they’re taking our jobs, or they’re gonna undermine the economy...I don’t [think] that’s even factually true, but it’s based in a fear that I want to counteract with stories of people and compassion” [Ben CE].

The desire to dig deeper and see what was behind the political rhetoric was also shared by facilitators/administrators:

...hearing a certain narrative from the media that might be negative against immigrants. So there’s...this tension between what they see, and what they hear. And so an interest to go there in person and see for themselves what the situation is like” [Mark F/A].

Facilitators noted that there are some enrollees who are just looking for adventure or college credit. They felt that young people were particularly interested as they were shaping their future plans and understanding of the world. Others wanted to just witness the realities there in person. One said, “...we need to go see and touch and feel what is happening at the border...” [Alex (F/A)]. Another said that they saw the border as a place intended to divide and separate, but that the purpose of their delegation was instead to create connections and relationships [R].

Several participants (Current & past enrollees and Facilitators/Administrators) indicated a desire to help people go who were hesitant or resistant to lenient migration policy (or were anti-

immigrant). Some had convinced friends or acquaintances to go by offering to pay their way or encouraging them to expand their perspective. And of course, there were people who did not want to go, for reasons of time, money, and comfort. One example of discomfort was the following:

...racism is not an issues they want to dive into, because it's going to address some area of their own lives that they don't want to let go of power, or immigration is not something that they're really open to, because they are pretty set in their perspective...where the law is the law, and are not interested in understanding the broader sense of how we got to this law, who made the law, who's imposing the law? And all of those are issues of injustice [Luisa (PE)].

In this quote, Luisa is recognizing that the experience of understanding new perspectives about migration may also be personally uncomfortable or challenging. She felt like that was why people perhaps avoided it altogether.

Other past enrollees who were members of a church group illustrated their desire to go as an extension of their mission or values in a faith community:

We went to the US/Mexico border with two overlapping purposes: (a) To learn about immigration realities in the U.S. and, (b) To live into our congregational peace pledge that says in order to be an 'authentic' peace church we must travel to places of conflict and have contact with people who suffer the impact of war and violence. The assumption is that it's hard to be converted or committed to the gospel of peace while maintaining a comfortable distance [R].

Goals for the Learning Delegation. Research participants hoped for learning and growth on the Learning Delegation in three different areas: (a) General learning about migration

issues and experience being in the space where migration happens; (b) Learning about deeper contextual issues and humanization in order to understanding the complexities of migration; and (c) Learning about ideas for getting more involved in action and *doing something* to address migration-related issues.

Enrollees expressed an interest in general learning about migration issues while having the experience of being at the border. One enrollee stated the following:

I think often I can read things in the news, or watch news, or read even position papers, but it's different to go and experience first hand, and to sit in somebody's living room and talk with them. Or talk to Border Patrol agents, and just experience what some of the social and ethical pressures are on people. So that was what I really wanted to go and learn [Adam (PE)].

This quote illustrates the enrollee's motivation to experience learning in the same context, and not from far away or from secondary sources. Several participants felt that being in the space would enhance their understanding. For example, one stated that they wanted to see "...the landscape both from a federal perspective, but also just a geographic perspective" [Michael (PE)]. Or they wanted "Just to understand a little bit more...what they have to go through...just to see and experience it" [Stephanie (CE)].



Figure 7: Landscape along the border on side of the United States. Photographed by Ben (CE).

Used with permission.



Figure 8: Photograph of landscape. Photographed by Wendy (CE).

Used with permission.

In terms of general learning, enrollees wanted to get a better understanding of “what goes down on the border” [Terry (CE)]. They wanted to learn more about the process of crossing the border, and the agencies and services that are offered there to support migrants [Wendy (CE)].

Another said they wanted to “have a better picture of their struggles and how hard they’ve worked to be here” [Kate (CE)].

Enrollees with some experience or exposure to migration wanted to gain a deeper understanding that gave them a sense of complexity and humanized the border. They were interested in political rhetoric surrounding migration as well as what led to increased militarization of the border [Lisa (PE)]. One stated, “So I would hear about migration in that sense, but had no real grasp on how the system worked” [Lisa (PE)]. She also stated “It was to understand the background or history of militarization” [Lisa (PE)]. Another recognized their immersion in a migration story that was steeped in terrorism and fear. They wrote, “I assumed and knew, historically, that the border was not always like that...but I had never grown up outside of that [assumption]” [Lisa (PE)]. For some, currently living in Latin America prompted their desire to understand the context more and share their learning with others: “I would say being here, seeing the other side, learning about the realities of forced migration made me want to continue to learn about it” [Lisa (PE)].

Research participants also hoped that participation in the Learning Delegation would prompt action either by themselves or others. Some even wanted to do service work while there were there. However, this is generally not the focus of these Learning Delegations: “We consider this more educational than service. They can always come back later and volunteer” [John (F/A)]. Yet, hopes for future service, advocacy, and storytelling were evident in both enrollees and facilitators. One facilitator illustrated this desire when they said:

So then, part of the commitment that people will make coming to the border was coming back in at least two places, where during two occasions, they will talk about this either at their church or their school or something, develop some kind of presentations so they will

share what they have seen...people would be informed of what's going on at the border from somebody who has been there [Alex (F/A)].

This was echoed by another facilitator/administrator who wanted a direct connection between the Learning Delegation itself and future action or advocacy for migration:

I like people to be able to envision what their future role...how do they see themselves working in the future, or even just living back at home, to help change the unjust system?...How can they change their act...[Beth (F/A)].

Lisa (a past enrollee) agreed by expressing her desire to spread interest in future work with the Project Partner, including the potential for leading Learning Delegations themselves:

....a big reason for wanting to go to see what people were learning along the borderlands to see if I could provide corresponding material or content or learning experiences...to see what it felt like to be on a learning delegation and to be a participant....and then critique it in my own way so that I could then use whatever my critiques were for participants of the learning delegations that I plan [Lisa (PE)]

This quote demonstrated her desire to move the learning forward into future initiatives.

Prompting action was also illustrated by the way they highlighted the local partner organizations and all the important work they were doing. In summary, research participants hoped for a broad perspective that incorporated various elements and perspectives about migration. They wanted an increased humanization of the border. Enrollees mentioned wanting to become a more effective advocate, learning about multiple sides of the issue, increase passion and understanding for advocacy. Facilitators said they wanted to humanize the border.

Preparation for the Learning Delegation. Six of the enrollees indicated that they had read a book, article, followed the news, or took a class that gave them some prior understanding

about migration issues. Two indicated that they did not read to prepare. Facilitators mentioned that they sometimes send future enrollees reading lists, but it is difficult when people come and some have some knowledge while others do not. Therefore, instead they start the Learning Delegation with an overview about migration or some form of contextual analysis. Part of what was mentioned was the need to “develop a common language” in preparatory materials [FN].

Description of the Experiences During the Learning Delegation

Research participants (Current & past enrollees and facilitators/administrators) were also asked about their experiences during the Learning Delegation. These descriptions included highlights of the Learning Delegation, logistics and planning, and suggestions and advice for the people they think should participate in a future Learning Delegation.

Particular highlights or impactful events. When study participants were asked about the highlights of the Learning Delegation, some mentioned particular activities that they felt were impactful, some mentioned their increased awareness or reactions in the encounters, some mentioned a more personal connection to new or existing relationships, and some mentioned being a witness to a person who was impacted by the delegation or particular efforts to help.

Activities. A complete list of activities was described in Chapter 4. The following activities were mentioned as being particularly impactful for some: Visit with Border Patrol, tour of the wall, vigil, visit to a cemetery, visit to a detention center, sitting in deportation hearings, visit to a rehabilitation center, and a lecture by a recommended author. In describing these activities, participants mentioned the ways they were impacted. One wrote,

...the first thing that comes to mind is just meeting with the two different border patrol agents....just speaking with them, I think, is one of the most memorable experiences...and something that maybe changed my thoughts more than other things...I

think mainly just seeing a different viewpoint...[because] I have this negative connotation of border patrol because I work with families every day who have negative things to say about them. Then, meeting with them and having the humanizing thing on my mind, I saw it in a different way [Wendy (CE)].

This enrollee had preconceptions about border patrol personnel that were challenged through her interactions. Another past enrollee simply stated, “ the humanizing side of the encounter with border patrol” [James (PE)].

Others mentioned the ways in which their perspectives were challenged when seeing the wall in particular:

I think seeing the wall, and then seeing where it ended. And the notion of the border patrol using that dangerous wilderness area as a deterrent. Kind of the cynicism of that was kind of unsettling. So yeah, that was a moment just unsettling [Ben (CE)].

And in another example from a past enrollee:

I think walking along the border, just getting a sense of what it looks like physically, the physical structure, was impactful...being able to see the kind of geographical issues involved with trying to build a border like that. The difficulty that it would be to walk across the terrain...the different levels...so just getting a sense of what that actually looks like helps me...I feel more like I know what I’m talking about [Adam (PE)].

Actually walking through the desert and feeling briefly the environmental and geographic context of the space helped illustrate their experience in an affective, even contemplative way.



Figure 9: Photograph of the wall. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Several participants mentioned the Vigil as particularly powerful. To illustrate this experience, an excerpt directly from the field notes is included below:

In December of 2000, six migrants were trying to come over in a drainage ditch and the Border Patrol closed the gates at the end of the tunnel and they all died.



Figure 10: Photograph of the drainage ditch. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Since that mass death, local faith leaders have held a vigil every Tuesday evening on the busy road leading up to the Border Patrol gate. Sometimes only 2 people come, and sometimes there have been 70. Usually an average of 10 people gather at a bench, which honors the lives of all migrant deaths in this region. Prayers are said, and instructions are given. Everyone involved is invited to follow a wagon filled with 225 crosses.

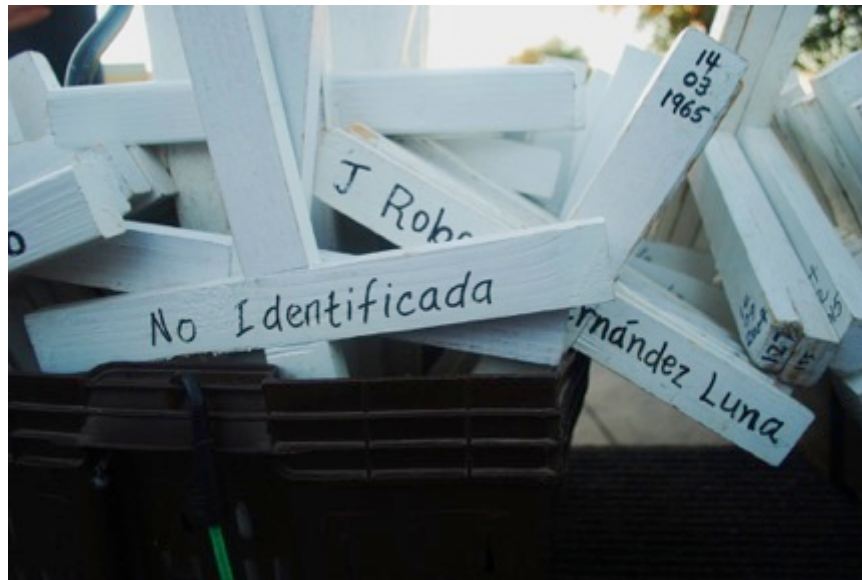


Figure 11: Crosses with names of the dead on them. Photographed by Ben (CE).

Used with permission.

Each cross has a name of a person found dead, with their birth date (if available) and approximate death date. Many say “No identificado” because they were not able to identify the body that was found. One by one, the vigil participants prop the crosses up on the curb between the road and the sidewalk. As they lay each one down, they yell out the name on the cross and the rest of the group responds with “Presente.” This call for presences, according to [name of facilitator] is a way of “calling them into our presence and also into the presence of our community.” A simultaneous act of remembrance and also public witness. The vigil participants line two full blocks with crosses until they go almost up to the Border Patrol gate.



Figure 12: Enrollees participating in the Vigil. Photo by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

As this was happening, the sun was setting. Cars full of Mexicans who were returning back after their day passed. Many had a somber look, some mouthed the word “Presente” with us, some cried, and some said simply, “Thank you.” As we finished one Mexican who was walking back into the country said to us, “Thanks for doing this, guys. Each one of those is a real person.

After the crosses were laid out, the group gathered for a short prayer service with a song in Spanish, a more complete dedication to three particular deaths, and then each of us saying our name out loud with the others around us reciting: “Presente.”

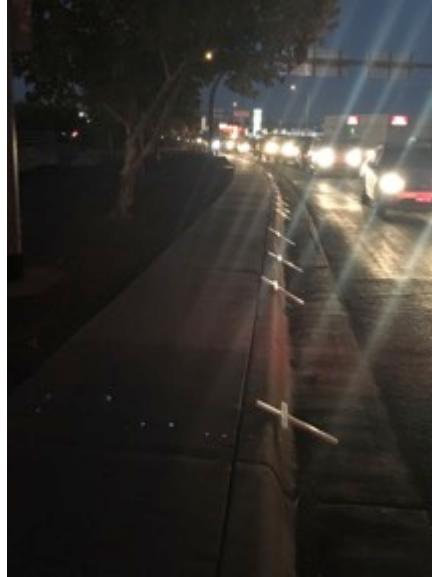


Figure 13: Photograph of crosses lined up on the road. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Our facilitator reflected on his years of attending and organizing this vigil. He said occasionally people stop and comment. One time he had a person stop and say, “I saw my brother’s cross on the curb. I want to give it to my mother. Can I take it to her.” They gave it to him, and he invited them to his house for a party. They went later. Some ask when they will be back and if they can join, and are welcomed into the vigil. The organizers wish they had more opportunity to connect with family members, but since Sonorans and Chihuahuans are less likely to die in the desert (because they are used to the conditions) contact between the vigil participants and family members is rare. They include people who have died of dehydration, heat stroke, freezing, murder, and they include one Border Patrol agent who was accidentally killed by his colleague on duty. They asked to include a rancher, who was killed by narco-traffickers, but his family is so anti-immigrant they did not want his name included [FN].

This public witness as a way to honor the dead is manifested at the very site of so much contention and anxiety. It is an event filled with emotion and shared between strangers. It humanized the border by expressing sorry for all the dead, and attempts to bring community members together in their desire for a more humane approach to migration. It left the Learning Delegation enrollees in a somber mood, as they contemplated the similarities they held with the dead. Several mentioned this weeks, even months after returning to the United States, stating that they think of the Vigil every Tuesday evening.

One study participant explained,

...powerful in the fact that maybe these people are still alive or maybe they aren't, but it's amazing that they are being honored by people that never knew them and maybe their family members don't even know that they're being honored" [Wendy (CE)].

A facilitator stated that they thought it helped Learning Delegation participants feel like they could do something when the other visits and information perhaps made them feel helpless, "...you get to almost pay your respects" [Mark (F/A)].

Another theme highlighted particularly somber elements of the Learning Delegation. For example, "...one of the points that I actually stood and cried when I let it all wash over me was when we walked through the graveyard and saw the graves of people who had died in the crossing" [Michael (PE)]. They also mentioned a local partner who "tries to find the families of people who have died in the desert that are unidentifiable. I think that really hit me looking at how they try to piece that all together now" [Michael (PE)]. Another reflected about a local partner:

They basically work with the coroner's office at a local hospital to try and help identify...bodies that were found in the desert and so...that trip helped me understand

more of the root causes...kind of like the urgency of the problem. They talked about how from the 90's until now, deaths in the desert have been increasing significantly because of the Border patrol practices...and because of the wall being built. And areas where it was once easier to cross into cities, and now people are forced out into the desert [Mark (F/A)].

Two past enrollees mentioned the visit to a detention center as the most impactful experience for them. Michael (a past enrollee) reflected on this experience:

...there was one man there who was praying and crying...and it was just wrenching imagining what all was going through his mind. And then we listened to the man in charge of the detention center, who was talking about his Christian duty, and how he was trying to be sure that people were treated well...people are caught in the system on both sides” [Michael (PE)].

Once again, this illustration of how two people can have dramatically different views about migration even when they espouse similar religious beliefs was noteworthy to Michael.

Some participants on the Learning Delegation also had the experience of observing deportation hearings at a United States Federal Court:

I think that was the thing that had the greatest impact on me because it was just kind of one of the very tangible examples of how the system is not really working...instead of migrants coming and they're apprehended and then sent back, they have to go through a court process, which is kind of inhumane...I think it just highlighted all the issues around economically putting so much money into a wall and all the money that has to pour into the court systems around here. But it's just not working because they can't find enough attorneys to represent and so then therefore they're lumping people together and trying

them all at once...It's not really going to deter them from coming back later. It just didn't seem to be working [Lisa (PE)].

Two past enrollees mentioned the highlight of an author talk from a person who had more details about historical and political issues along the border. They were particularly interested in digging deeper into the theoretical and conceptual issues that were happening at the border, and the author provided them with that information.

Affective reactions to experiences on the Learning Delegation. When asked about highlights, some study participants mentioned reactions they had, including hope and empathy. Specifically regarding hope, they mentioned all of the exposure to various organizations that were helping migrants: "...because you get to actually visit organizations that are trying to help fight some kind of like the root causes" [Mark (F/A)]. Another said, "An overwhelming feeling was a thread of hope. Seeing the agencies that are trying to help people...that was good to see...because I'm not sure I knew that that was all going on anymore" [Ben (CE)]. One reflected on the hope she observed in people who were struggling in Mexico and banding together to work to "...pull themselves out of some tough times" [Stephanie (CE)]. And, there were also comments about the irony of there being more hope on the border than far away:

I think the further one is away from these places, there is a greater felt feeling of hopelessness...there's a paradox about moving towards where this conflict is being realized, and talking...there is a palpable spirit of hope in the midst of this community that's resisting this violence [Andy PE].

Several study participants were particularly moved by the story of a local coffee collective that provides sustainable employment for coffee farmers and their families, so that the economic need

to migrate is addressed. In particular, enrollees were inspired by the coffee growers' work ethic, their perspective on life, and their dedication to making a sustainable life on their lands.



Figure 14: Photograph of farmer demonstrating different types of coffee beans. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Other study participants reflected on an increased sense of empathy:

I think that one of the things I experienced most was that awareness of the desperation, that fuels migration. I think being there, and seeing the geographies, seeing the wall, seeing the border patrol, hearing the stories. I mean how desperate do you have to be, if your best option is to try to scale a wall to find a job, knowing the full weight of the U.S. government's trying to catch you, and arrest you [Ben (CE)].

One research participant said, "I feel more of a connection with them [migrants] in the sense of I kind of know where they're coming from" [Wendy (CE)]. Several others mentioned the impact of genuine interactions while on the Learning Delegations. For example, "Understanding data, working with the border patrol agents, walking some of the trails, spending

some time with church context and community, to me the most transformational part by far is just meeting with those who have recently been deported” [Luisa (PE)] or “...where we passed those three crosses. And couple of them had caused me to think of my own daughters, and just be aware of it. Those were somebody’s daughters that died on that desert. So, that was emotionally pretty powerful” [Ben (CE)].

There were some highlights that reflected being in the same time and space as those who had crossed:

It’s the sitting on one side of the valley looking across and realizing, ‘How many people crossed? How many people have I known crossed in that area,’ and just thinking what a big, what a traumatic experience it is for so many people [Terry (CE)].



Figure 15: Photograph of the valley. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Another participant mentioned this temporal and space connection from the courtroom detention hearings when we listened to cases where people crossed during the night right where we were

staying. When the participants in the Learning Delegation had any kind of personal interaction or conversation with a migrant, it left an impact:

I think this is powerful because they can talk with people face-to-face there and hear their stories about that's going on, why they decide to immigrate and what happened. And so- that kind of encounter-the people who really bring their stories back to the congregation and share about, "Well I met an immigrant and I hear about this" That's something that really impacts them [Jose (F/A)].

They felt more prepared to return to their communities with alternative stories and perspectives than what was being provided by the media.

Participants' reactions to the logistics and planning of the Learning Delegation.

Several subthemes were evident in the data related to the theme of logistics and planning of the Learning Delegation. These included reflections on the content of the Learning Delegation, the scheduling of the Learning Delegations, the recruitment for enrollees, and debriefing and reflection. Both enrollees and facilitators/administrators contributed to these comments.

Content of the Learning Delegation. Meeting a migrant on their journey is not always an experience that can be facilitated by the Learning Delegation. Factors such as timing and appropriateness come into play. However, it was mentioned by several study participants as an important part of the learning:

I think at least hearing one. It wouldn't need to be a recent migrant, but speaking with anyone who had been in some type of circumstance what we were learning about I think would have been helpful. Just get a different perspective or viewpoint because all the perspectives are of people that are similar to us...I understand it could be hard or it's

weird to use someone for our gain. I don't know. It would have to be the right circumstance [Wendy (CE)].

A facilitator noted, "I think it's important to go to the actual border and to meet actual migrants, and to hear their stories. And I think that's really helpful especially for the people who might be more conservative and might be skeptical about undocumented immigration" [Mark (F/A)].

Other comments on content from the facilitators touched on planning activities that were meaningful to participants, following the same route as a migrant from Central America may, and not visiting places that were too intense (i.e. the morgue). They also mentioned getting feedback from groups about their particular interests and catering the Learning Delegation to their interests/strengths and planning groups with particular focus (i.e. artists or lawyers). Others really were more interested in purposely-diverse groups. Another suggested that there be leaders in the group that align with the different interests (religious-pastor; academic-professor). Participants appreciated a balance of activities.

Schedule of the Learning Delegation. There were many evaluative comments regarding the schedule. However, most were positive. Participants described it as "full" and "busy" but also good. At times there were too many border crossings in one day or a change in plans regarding housing. These were setbacks identified that could use improvement. Facilitators expressed how fatigued they were with the long days and details, and how it can easily burn you out. They say it takes adaptability, patience, and an expectation that "you're gonna be tired" [Alex (F/A)]. That fatigue is also felt by the participants and was noted by Alex (a facilitator/administrator):

I have learned that sometimes there is too much that you can give people. That you can overwhelm them with information that at the end of the day, they just don't know what to

do with so much. So they get tired, their brain gets tired, so sometimes balancing that, cutting some of the visits or spreading the visits...[Alex (F/A)].

A facilitator/administrator agreed with Alex when reflecting on the schedule of the Learning Delegation:

We consider for sure that people don't get bored, and we forget that they need to rest, too. We try to put our things to do, to do, to do, and then figure out that the second day people are already tired, because our days are very full. I think the challenge is that we need to be more aware of that, that we need to be more flexible. If something doesn't happen, that's fine, and try to see the group, the energy and how they're moving and things like that so we can be flexible [Jose (F/A)].

Yet one more expressed the need for reflection and debriefing when she said, "...we also give people processing time, or to do whatever, downtime. You just can't go the whole time" [Barbara (F/A)]. This has to happen in a way that provides them an opportunity to feel the discomfort or incongruence with former assumptions and time to then think about their new learning. Facilitators were also cognizant of the pacing of the schedule:

We figured out pretty early that groups that come down here and have a packed schedule are brain dead after about a day or day and a half. They're tired. Part of it is they're learning so much new stuff. Part of it is, even people who are pretty much on board, who've had a lot of experience in other countries, there's still an underlying, oftentimes not talked about anxiety being on the border. Even if they don't believe the media at one level, they've heard so much negative stuff in the media that there's a level at which it might be true, that kind of thing. So people do need to not have schedules that are quite so packed [John (F/A)].

And, they wanted to make sure they checked in with the Learning Delegation participants regarding their energy level and need to down time: “I can get very caught up in making phone calls, getting taxis, so just all the logistical things, but I need to schedule in those check-in times to make sure that I am aware of the groups needs for the moment, when they’re there” [Beth (F/A)]. The multiple roles and tasks that facilitators have to manage is challenging and exhausting.

Recruitment for people to go on the Learning Delegation. Facilitators discussed recruitment and indicated that they used to advertise to groups in order to get participants. However, not most groups call them and ask about developing a Learning Delegation. Many participants heard about the Delegation through a friend who had been on one before.

Debriefing & reflection. Many participants mentioned the importance of debriefing and reflection on their experience, and that they felt it added richness and more dimensions to their experience. Some felt they had ample opportunity for debriefing: “I think when we had meals together, or just sitting around, they made it comfortable to ask questions. They offered the time to talk about stuff after...that got a little hard sometimes. If we visit someplace, we’d have some discussion time about it. I enjoyed those times to hear from each of us” [Stephanie CE], while others hoped for more:

The ones that have really built in space for reflection, maybe that’s something about my personality as well, but I just think that’s there’s a certain amount of effectiveness to those. I think some Learning Delegations assume, like, we’ll overwhelm you for a week, and then you’ll go back home and reflect. I think good reflection time along the way is pretty important...if I reflect on what I would change or emphasize, it would be this mixture of experience and reflection. I remember there were a few nights on this trip

where people were kind of, like, visits to certain places had run over...and we decided well, we'll can the evening reflection time that day. And I always thought that's a loss, that's a significant loss. There's something important there [Andy (PE)].

Yet another wrote, "It seemed like a healthy dance from the casual to the more deep" [FN].

Debriefing and reflection time were also valued for the learning that occurred between participants: "When we finally did have one of those debrief moments, it was really rich, and you got a lot out of just hearing what other people were doing or thinking about, and the questions other people were asking" [Adam (PE)]. Participants complained when the schedule did not allow for enough reflection time. Sometimes there were tensions or disagreements among participants. One facilitator stated that "I try to be aware of these intercultural interactions, and where there may be sources of tension, and know how to facilitate reflection around those things" [Beth (F/A)].

There was a mix of reporting regarding reflection time that was planned and spontaneous. Many reflections occurred, for example, around the table when the group was sharing a meal, or in the van while the group was travelling from place to place. There also seemed to be a need for a mixture of individual and group reflection time:

We try to build in, every day, toward the end of the afternoon, some real time off, and ask people to rest but maybe do a little thinking individually, so that when we come back together after sinner and do a debrief, or maybe tomorrow, then you really have some things to offer [John (F/A)].

The purpose of their processing and note taking also varied: "...they're all in different spaces. I mean, some are writing their sermons, some of them are writing letter of legislation. They're all

kind of collectively, you know, trying to lean in where they have some resources of power” [Luisa (PE)]. None of the participants felt there was too much debriefing.

Regarding the task itself of debriefing and reflection, sometimes that is facilitated by the Project Partner facilitator and sometimes by other leaders in the group. One facilitator suggested that they needed to take more time or use a slower process for these reflection times. Another suggested that the facilitated debriefing and reflection time should continue into their home context and include brainstorming and reflection about next steps.

Description of the Experience After the Learning Delegation

Finally, research participants were asked to reflect on their experiences after they had returned from a Learning Delegation. The reflections about how they were influenced, changed, or transformed by the Learning Delegations are included in Chapter 7. However, their evaluative comments about the Learning Delegations and their suggestions and advice regarding future Learning Delegations are included here.

Evaluative comments about the Learning Delegations. After the Learning Delegation was over, study participants gave positive, negative, and neutral evaluations of their experience on the Learning Delegation. They also made suggestions for improvements for future delegations.

Positive evaluative comments. At least nine enrollees (9 out of 10) made specific explicitly positive evaluative comments about their experience on the Learning Delegation. They described it being “eye-opening” [Stephanie (CE)], “helpful/meaningful” [Ben (CE)], and guest speakers or local presenters whose presentation made it come alive:

...helpful to either touch on topics that people already knew and maybe it was helpful to hear it again, or for people like me...it was the first time I had heard something like

that...so to kind of get everybody to the same level and then go to the Learning Delegation. I think it was really helpful [Lisa (PE)].

They liked the size of the group. Specifically, they mentioned being in the same geographic space and how that helped them bring the reality of migration closer. They also enjoyed the range of perspectives, which included border patrol and the deportation hearings at the end [Ben (CE)]. One said:

Hearing other voices...[our facilitator] was just talking to border patrol people, and it seemed very genuine with them...he was pretty open...I'm a little wary around activists, whether they're on the right or the left. There's a certain element of certainty, that you can bring...I didn't sense that...so that helped my sense of trust [Ben (CE)].

Other comments reflected positively on the facilitators: "I thought the leaders did excellent...I am just amazed at their commitment, dedication, and good example it was for us....opened up their lives to us...that meant a lot to me to know they had built relationships with these people and it wasn't just a show kind of thing [R] and another past enrollee said, "...we were able to be tourists, but also be students, if you will, and also be participants, and even advocates. That mix was nice" [Michael (PE)]. Another one specifically mentioned that they enjoyed the intergenerational mix in the group, that the retired or older participants learned from the younger college students and vice versa. Michael also said, "I think [project partner] has done a remarkable job...helping put people in a position where they can see something new and learn something, and I think it's a great program" [Michael (PE)].

Five administrators/facilitators also gave positive feedback about the program. These comments reflected gratitude for relationships with local partners and relationships formed during the Learning Delegation: "The connections you make with people, and seeing how

enthused they are towards issues of peace and justice...the reflection and processing and giving people concrete things to do when they go home, hopefully they can continue that energy...”

[Beth (F/A)]. They also appreciated the different experiences that occurred with different groups, “...every time we take groups there, it’s something different every time...even now we visit the same partners or something, but something new is in the group, a new energy or new people” [Jose (F/A)]. The facilitators/administrators feel like the program has good resources and local partners.

Negative evaluative comments. Enrollees in the Learning Delegation discussed several negative aspects of their experience as well, including a very packed schedule with very little down time, the need for more debrief and reflection, unexpected changes in the schedule, and concerns about the cost (in terms of whether or not it is the “best” use of their money).

Facilitators and administrators mentioned challenges with language, especially in terms of the local partners. They also mentioned long days and physical exhaustion; that they did not feel they had enough time to do it all, and the challenge of managing differences in personalities, political perspectives, and learning styles. The other challenge that was mentioned acknowledged that many people who sign up for Learning Delegations are white and have access to money, and they wanted to avoid an exploitive or “zoo” feeling. One facilitator/administrator illustrated this when they said:

I feel interaction should be a mutual exchange, but learning delegations, yeah, you’re not coming in and building a church when you could have just given money...learning delegations are very similar, just with a different face. Where we are just receiving information for our good...our hope is that with this information people have gained...is to go back home and connect, whether it be advocacy work or change their lifestyle,

which then has a trickle effect of changing the rights through the system...it can be uncomfortable bringing groups when it's like, 'oh, look at the white people coming in to...' I guess what makes me uncomfortable is the zoo feeling, is us going and looking at them...[Beth (F/A)].

But they recognized that this is an internal debate that goes back and forth saying that on the other hand, people are changed and they change the communities around them. So it is worthwhile to consider the question of how helpful or hurtful these initiatives can be.

Neutral evaluative comments. Some evaluative comments on the part of the enrollees demonstrated an awareness about how the facilitators and program influenced their experience. Specifically, they noted whether the facilitators were migrants themselves or were white North Americans. Some also indicated that they wished they had talked directly with a recent migrant, while others said that may cause more damage or not be appropriate.

Participant suggestions and advice for future Learning Delegations. Study participants were asked to reflect on who attends Learning Delegations and who they might recommend as an enrollee in a future Learning Delegation. They were also invited to provide advice to future participants. These reflections are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary for participant suggestions and advice for future Learning Delegations

Particular part of the Learning Delegation	Identified suggestion and/or advice	Respondents
Who already participates in Learning Delegations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School/University Groups • Church Groups • White, Middle-class, Live in the Northern part of the United States • Tend to be young or retired • Already sympathetic to migration experience 	Facilitators/Administrators
Who <i>should</i> participate in Learning Delegation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative people (religiously or politically) • People who are skeptical about 	Facilitators/Administrators Current & past Enrollees

	<p>migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People from rural areas • People who voted for Donald Trump • People with access, skills, and ability to shape public opinion • Republicans • Young people (less set in their ideas, learning how to lead, and not afraid to speak up) • More people who are not White or not from the United States • People who are already invested in the issues • People who have a public interest (pastors, teachers, artists, policy-makers, board members, and council members) in migration and will complete action • White pastors • Teachers • Anyone 	
Group make-up of Learning Delegations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be interest specific (i.e. economics, art, etc.) • Ethnically diverse groups 	Enrollees
Advice for future enrollees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go with an open mind • Prepare for a full schedule with potential physical demands. • Stretch yourself outside of your comfort zone. • Take advantage of reflection and debriefing times • Take notes • Learn about issues before you go 	Current & past enrollees and facilitators/administrators
Advice for planners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be flexibility around the length of the delegations • Need for more detailed and refined resources for advocacy • Streamline contact and arrangements with local partners • Increase processing/reflection time. • Include stories from broader audiences. • Encourage people to bring a 	Current & past enrollees

	<p>friend so they know/feel comfortable with someone already</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give prior notice about the physical and emotional demands of the Learning Delegation • Provide additional preparation and readings • More political/contextual analysis • More young people 	
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This Chapter provided an overview of the data from this inquiry that described the experiences of the study participants before, during, and after the Learning Delegation to the border of the United States and Mexico. The following Chapter will discuss specific strategies either observed/experienced on the Learning Delegation or implemented with the hope of shifting perceptions or actions surrounding migration-related issues.

Chapter Six: Strategies identified in the Learning Delegation for Shifting Perceptions and Motivating Action in Migration-related Issues

One of the explicit goals of the project partner is to find a way to shift perceptions or motivate advocacy efforts related to migration across the United States and Mexico border. Therefore, this Chapter of findings will explore the strategies used by the project partner and the local partners, or noticed or experienced by the enrollees and participants in order to try to prompt new perceptions or actions related to migration. These strategies are arranged into three mains sections: (a) Strategies that fostered connection and collaboration with migrant populations and local partners; (b) Strategies that employed diverse perspectives, storytelling, human empathy, and belonging; and (c) Strategies that provided opportunities for advocacy and action.

Strategies that fostered Connection & Collaboration with Migrant Populations and Local Partners

The first area the emerged from inductive data analysis illustrated that connections and collaborative efforts with migrant populations and local partners (both in the enrollees' home communities and also while on the Learning Delegations) played a key role in shaping their attitudes and ideas about migration. These were illustrated through four sub-themes: (a) Barriers and connections related to language; (b) Collaborative efforts between interested parties; (c) The importance of local expertise and local autonomy, and (d) The influence of experiential learning efforts during the Learning Delegation.

Barriers and connections related to language. There were several different themes that addressed language. The first related to comments made by enrollees related to helping people who have migrated to learn English. Several of them were currently or formerly involved

in a volunteer position tutoring someone in English. This encouraged friendships and new understandings to form. For example, one said, “I look forward to go on plenty of Wednesday night ESL, I can’t wait to go. There’s some cool people there...They wanna learn English, but they also want relationships” [Terry (CE)].

Another area related to language was the challenge in the process of the Learning Delegation when working with partners or facilitators who are not fluent in both Spanish and English. One of the main local partners, for example, hired Mexican interns to work with Learning Delegations. However, they did not have interns who would work on the U.S. side, either for lack of English or lack of permission to cross. Another identified challenge was when a local partner only spoke Spanish, and so the facilitator may have needed a third party to communicate with them. Certainly, the facilitators who were fluent in Spanish mentioned that the ability to communicate directly was an opportunity for them. They also felt like it added credibility when compared to a White North American as a facilitator: “...there’s something about these two [nationality] who are leading learning delegation groups...my upbringing, the background that I link to this I think has influenced the learning delegations. It has been excellent to also have this language...because I am also a translator, interpreter... [Alex F/A]. This asset was also mentioned by a North American facilitator who was living in Mexico, although this was also a challenge because he said when you are bridging two languages all the time, it is easy to not feel competent in either one. A third challenge related to the number of people who are crossing the U.S.-Mexico border who do not speak Spanish. They may speak an indigenous language or may come from Romania, India, or different parts of Africa [R].

Another consideration was the language used in the context of the Learning Delegation itself. Words such as “delegation,” or “tour,” or “migrant” were interpreted in different ways.

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are different terms for encounters such as a learning delegation. Some people use the term “tour” and were fine with it. Others noted that “tour” was perhaps a counter for “mission trip” where you go to learn rather than going to teach or impose something [FN, Luisa (PE)].

Before interacting with any of the study participants, I explained my use of the word “migrant” and why I felt like it more accurately represented the people I wanted to focus on. Some felt uncomfortable with that term, yet others felt like it was a positive term [FN]. Some participants had not thought of it and some felt like migrant was better than immigrant [R]. There was also a thought that the power of the word was less about the actual word and more about who was saying it and the tone of voice and context within which it is said. Participants also discussed the negative terms that are used for people who have migrated including “illegal,” “alien,” and as we heard from the Border Patrol, simply, “bodies” [R]. One facilitator said, “I think the term migrant is used in really different ways by different people. I mean obviously a militia man when he is talking about migrants, he is angry and is looking down on them. Someone like [name of local partner organizer] views migrants as heroes. So, I don’t think there is a term we can use that people can’t in some sense can’t interpret” [John (F/A)]. They also felt like they held assumptions about migrants specifically being farm workers [Stephanie (CE)] or specifically being from Mexico or Central America [Wendy (CE)]. Words definitely make a difference in our perceptions and understandings.

Collaborative efforts between interested parties. A second strategy related to shifting perceptions or actions around migration included collaborative efforts between interested parties in migration. This was mentioned three times by an enrollee in the context of local collaboration in support of migrants in their home community. For example, community meetings with

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, local police departments, and also local policy-makers. These meetings were not categorized as “successful” in terms of their effectiveness in changing perceptions, but one current enrollee reinforced an identified need when he said, “I see it as a real important for the police community and the Latino community to have a relationship” [Terry (CE)]. He also mentioned collaboration with policymakers:

We do get involved in the city trying to bring people together and find ways for people to meet. I truly think...any change that happens within people, it's much more effective for that change...if people know somebody in that situation. Know somebody that's been oppressed, how it affects their family and all...there's a change, or at least an educational piece there that doesn't happen unless there's a face-to-face part of it [Terry (CE)].

The administrators/facilitators emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts with local partners who assist with the Learning Delegations. These themes were especially prominent when asked about the efforts they take to form and maintain relationships with local partners. They specifically mentioned a desire for reciprocity—that there would be something exchanged between the local partners and the learning delegation. For example, many local partners get some kind of financial honoraria for their presentations to the learning delegation. They also provide a really key learning opportunity:

...Part of it is that they are getting out the story and the other thing is that people are really learning. There were a lot of folks who didn't have any clue what goes on down here. Because of [local] partners, now they know” [Barbara (F/A)].

Mark (a facilitator/administrator) mentioned that the relationships formed on the learning delegations sometimes evolve into long-term supportive relationships [Mark (F/A)]. It is

important to consider how these relationships may or may not influence the accountability of advocacy after the Learning Delegation is over.

Some collaborative relationships are difficult to navigate, especially when working through a host or gatekeeping agency. However, the facilitators are learning how to navigate this and the longer they do the work or spend time at the border, the easier it is for them to understand them. One stated, “So there are also interests, competing interests sometimes between organizations. And the more that I have been at the border, the more I became aware of that and I have tried to balance some of that too by asking directly to [local partner]” [Alex (F/A)]. One facilitator spent two weeks volunteering with each local partner in order to better understand their work and mission as an organization.

They also talked about the role of good communication. One facilitator/administrator said the following:

So that’s one of our challenges is to try to make sure that we’re all on the same page. In terms of how we work with those partners, and who communicates to who. And I think [facilitator] has done a good job of keeping those partnerships close. Just because he goes down there quite a bit. I mean not it’s less and less. So he has a personal relationship with them, whereas you know I’m not there very often, I’ve only been there once, and so I kind of just...keep those partnerships strong by just having good communication with them [Mark (F/A)].

Spending time and effort investing in relationships with local partners appeared to be a priority of the Project Partner.

The importance of local expertise and local autonomy. These themes related closely to another strategy, which is the effort and emphasis on local expertise and lived experience:

We stopped giving advice. We'll say, 'we're not your boss.' When people were coming down and giving them things and telling them what to do. But it keeps them under people's thumbs. And people pat themselves on the back thinking they are being good Christians. Frankly, I don't think I know near as much about what those women [migrant women who were a part of a collective] need as they do [John (F/A)].

Other issues mentioned by enrollees that related to a strategy of local expertise included a need to hear directly from people who have experienced migration. Both of the enrollees that mentioned this were in a delegation where there was no opportunity to talk to someone who had recently crossed or attempted to cross the border. Enrollees also mentioned the importance of an opportunity or experience of making connections to migrant populations in their communities in the United States.

Facilitators/administrators agreed that while sometimes there is no opportunity for enrollees to connect with the direct experience of a migrant, the closer they can get to the source, the better the information, recognizing that people with lived experience have the most expertise on the topic. This fluctuates with the timing of the learning delegation and the number of people crossing [FN]. There is a tension between honoring this expertise and experience (as opposed to letting the stories be filtered through a North American facilitator) and also not taking a “zoo-like approach.” One facilitator/administrator reflected on this when he said:

We can't just roam around looking for migrants—where are we partnering where we have relationships with migrants that we can talk to—we can't just pull people out and tell them to speak to this group—how can we authentically work with these groups? [FN].

They felt it was good when the facilitator themselves have lived experience with migration and could better relate to local partners. One facilitator reflected:

So that gives me more access to stories on a personal level. I sometimes would start the conversation by saying “I’m from [name of country] and this is my story,” so then, not just, asking for people’s stories right away, but I am sharing my story. And sometimes then they feel like they have to share their story too, so that has given me access to some stories [Alex (F/A)].

There was also an expressed desire to keep the learning delegations focused on local knowledge. One facilitator said,

...the goal of learning delegations is to try and open doors for new understandings but without yielding to the temptation to tell the locals what to do. Sometimes [project partner] gets put on a pedestal and people rely on them for advice or think their opinion matters more than it should. Always let the local people decide what they want to do.

Too many people treat the poor like children [FN].

These quotes reflect a desire on the part of the Project Partner to be sensitive to the invasive and paternalistic nature of many short-term visits. Instead, they are trying to be sensitive and respectful by prioritizing the initiatives and expertise of local organizations.

The influence of experiential learning during the Learning Delegation. The final theme related to strategy on the Learning Delegation that was prominent in the data included the use of experiential learning. Nine enrollees mentioned this as an important element of the learning delegation. One enrollee said, “...what you see depends on where you stand. I wanted to go with this group of people, and stand on the border and see what I saw” [Michael (PE)].

They stated that the experiential learning component enforced or enhanced their learning.

Another said,

...to be a peace church, to be a following, this witness that we see in the teachings in the life of Jesus, you can't do that as well just from your living room and reading, you have to kind of rub elbows with real life people and see these things for yourself. And that's how it gets inside of you [Andy (PE)].

These experiences of rubbing elbows also helped enhance their advocacy work: "I can tell stories because I was there" [James (PE)]. Another said, "...just getting a sense of what that actually looks like helps me...I feel more, when I am talking about it to people, I feel more like I know what I am talking about" [Adam (PE)].

Two facilitators agreed with these assertions—that it enhances or enforces the learning. They specifically mentioned the weight of the vigil experience and just "being present in a space where students can be more open about the realities of the border...this opportunity of exposure, of on the ground, is really extremely valuable" [Luisa (PE)]. The importance of experiential educational strategies on the learning delegation leads into the following section related to relational strategies, which include storytelling, human connection, and belonging.



Figure 16: Photograph of official border marker from the Mexican side. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Strategies that Employed Diverse Perspectives, Storytelling, Human Empathy, and Belonging

A second large theme surrounding the strategies that worked to help shape understandings about migration included presenting diverse perspectives, the power of storytelling, and the presence of human empathy and belonging during the learning delegation. Each of these will be explained in the following section.

Diverse Perspectives. Enrollees on the learning delegation mentioned the impact of hearing diverse perspectives on the learning delegation, specifically related to their encounters with the border patrol. They stated that these encounters helped them humanize the border patrol and made them more relatable than they had anticipated—especially when they heard “...what motivated them...what kind of values push you that way” [Adam (PE)]. Enrollees also felt like

the variety of presentations and agencies they visited helped to broaden their perspective and give them hope. This was evident in the following quote regarding the Vigil:

In the shadow of the wall are some of the most amazing communities of resistance; of empowerment; and of solidarity. They are made up of people of different countries, with different languages, bringing different religious customs-but who join together for prayer; for bible study; for delivering drinking water to remote parts of the desert; for marketing fairly-traded, organic coffee; and for a weekly vigil to honor those who've died in the desert—a vigil that has been happening continuously since 2001 [R].

Facilitators and administrators, on the other hand, reflected about the diverse perspectives existing within the enrollees of the learning delegation, including those who may have been anti-immigrant or minimally skeptical about migrants. They discussed the need to let the local partners know that there are diverse opinions and that poignant questions may arise [Jose (F/A)]. They also discussed the different ways that they try to make the learning delegation more diverse, in terms of age, religious perspective, ethnicity/language, or perspectives about migration. One said that it helps to “...move from a silo world into a more kingdom-minded, broader sense of kingdom” [Luisa (PE); D] and another said, “Those different perspectives made for rich interactions” [R]. The use of the term “kingdom-minded” is a theological term that refers to a more communal understanding. Another facilitator talked about intentionally connecting to people who disagree with you. My field notes indicated this reflection:

[name of facilitator] said that to be effective you have to recognize others' truths. He said as soon as I make the assumption that I can see the whole truth, then there is a problem. He said “We are not neutral. We are opposed to violence on all sides. But to

be effective, we have to be able to form relationships with all of them. The best way to conquer your enemy is to make them your friend” [FN].

The facilitator in this instance was responding to the groups’ hesitancy about really connecting to the stories of the border patrol agents and engaging with them empathically. This was a challenge for several of us.

Three facilitators/administrators mentioned the importance of diversity in learning delegation programming. They said that this helped “show the complexities of each topic [Beth (F/A)]. Another said they “...look for specific visits that can counter each false narrative that exists” [FN]. Finally, they felt like the learning delegations sparked diverse perspectives in local churches after the enrollees return—that these churches seemed to have a broader global perspective as a result of the expanded perspective of individuals within the church [Luke (F/A)].

Storytelling. One theme that arose in the data was the power of storytelling. This was mentioned by both enrollees and facilitators as it pertains to the process of the Learning Delegation itself, as an awareness of privilege, as a response or antidote to anti-immigrant sentiment or as a strategy for prompting interest or sparking curiosity about a perspective that may be different from one’s own, and as a way to foster connectedness and relationships.

First, there was sense of responsibility for the Learning Delegation Enrollees to hear stories from those on the border and to carry these stories with them into places where they needed to be heard in order for some kind of change to happen:

The primary tools that it gave me were additional specifics that I could bring and examples to a kind of argument that I want to make. I can tell some stories because I was there. I have a lot to talk to people or that sort of thing. I had tools before I went to be

able to talk about migration. They were just a bit more theoretical and abstract in some ways [James (PE)].

These tools of more specific details in stories helped facilitate their discussions about migration.

Another past enrollee agreed when he said:

Even though I knew the facts already, stories and narrative are also what kind of drives one's adequacy, or one's priorities, so I came home with new narratives, new stories, new people. In some ways it built on what I knew in a way that kind of infused on new urgency, new energy. And some new ways of seeing [Andy (PE)].

One facilitator named the re-telling of stories as a "multiplier effect" [Beth (F/A)]. Storytelling during the learning delegation also gave the enrollees a better awareness of their own privilege.

Storytelling was mentioned as a strategy on the Learning Delegation and also in situations at home as it played a role in responding to narratives about migration that were less accepting or welcoming, or minimally sparked curiosity about a perspective different from one's own. This was both directly experienced by participants and also witnessed by participants. One participant reflected about hearing the perspective of people on the U.S. side of the border feeling frustrated and angry about the violence and danger from the cartel and how this was expressed in a way that appeared to be anti-immigrant. One past enrollee reflected on his new understanding about this:

It kind of humanized that fear and that frustration for me in a way that I didn't really think about before...at the same time it didn't change my thinking about how immigration should work. It just made me think there's got to be a better way...and that that kind of artificial boundary lines are perhaps not having the effect that...all communities should be free from the fear of violence...[Adam (PE)].

This past enrollee was gaining a broader perspective that encompassed the reasons behind migration, and the potential role of prevention by addressing fear. Another enrollee said, “You learn to know the families...and just hearing some of their stories and what not, it just made us interested in looking into this further and seeing what they experienced” [Terry (CE)]. He continued with, “...actually talking to somebody that’s in that situation...that makes it more alive” [Terry (CE)]. So once again the experiential nature of the learning delegation helped facilitate motivation.

Stories were used to foster connectedness or relationships. Two enrollees mentioned the need to the source of the stories, and the role that played in their “buy-in” to the story. When there is no trust or relationships behind the story, there can be skepticism [Alex (F/A)]. There also can be mutual benefit for both the storyteller and the story-listener. One facilitator noted, “...[they] love to tell their story. It helps them. It think it helps them simply to be listened to, and it helps when people come and buy coffee...everywhere they go, people want to tell their story and do so willingly” [John (F/A)]. One local partner said (about storytelling) that “it makes them feel human [Alex F/A]. Even so, one facilitator also recognized that being the storyteller can be hard:

...more so at the beginning when I started doing this work. After a while, I realized it’s also a therapy for myself of sharing my story and then also realizing there is a gift in there, that exchange of stories with the people, some of them will probably leave with a little more hope, and I also will leave for them more hope also from hearing their stories. But yeah, it is draining at times. Several times it’s bring tears, then tell the story, but afterall, I did figure out that sharing the story has been very therapeutic and part of trauma healing for me as well [Alex (F/A)].

The power of storytelling was illustrated by a participant reflection with the metaphor of coffee: “Maybe it tastes better when you know the story. Maybe you know that it matters. That’s the way it often works” [R]. Another said, “I think it’s important to go to the actual border and to meet actual migrants, and to hear their stories. And I think that’s really helpful, especially for the people who might be more conservative. And might be kind of skeptical about undocumented immigration” [Mark (F/A)].

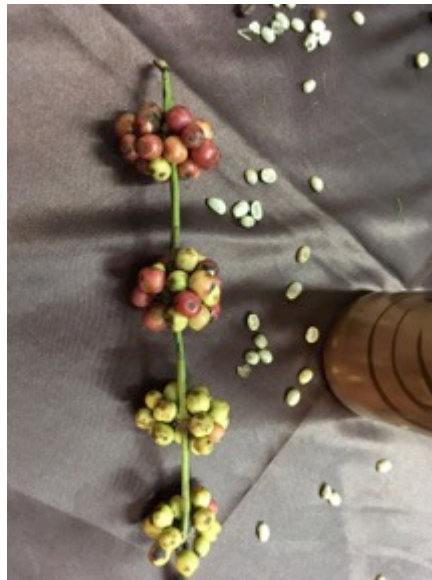


Figure 17: Photograph of coffee plant. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Human Empathy & Belonging. Human empathy and belonging certainly played a role in the ways that people connected to the topic of migration. Whether they were making new connections and developed empathy during the course of the Learning Delegation, or strengthened the relationships that were already established before the Learning Delegations, participants reflected on the ways in which elements of the Learning Delegations emphasized an emotion connection to someone who was different from them.

The first area where relationships were strengthened was through the Learning Delegation itself. Three current enrollees mentioned the connections they felt with friends at home or at work who had experienced migration themselves:

Those stories are important to me as I get to know my friends, and I'm always curious, 'So how did you come across? Where did you come across? What were the conditions?' Those kind of issues. They've always been of interest to me and helps me feel closer to them" [Terry (CE)].

Others were touched by interactions with strangers or with artifacts that represented a stranger:

I've been to the wall before, so it wasn't the first time I saw it, but when you're standing there and somebody comes on the other side that our leader knows, and we have this powerful conversation...and we reach through the walls to hold his hand as we pray...it changes something that's a policy issue, to something that's affecting this man Rico, who we met, who we're touching, and who we're hearing his stories about his children on the other side of the wall. It gives flesh to issues. And it makes all the difference [Andy (PE)].

Encounters with artifacts (the lid/cap of a baby bottle or a handwritten list of family phone numbers) that were found on or near the border wall also played a powerful role in fostering stronger connections to the relational part of migration. One enrollee said, "When we were coming down that hill, for some reason when I saw that little cover to that bottle, it just made it so real [R]." And another said, "It was personal" [Stephanie (CE)].



Figure 18: Photograph of a dropped baby bottle cap by the wall. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Strong emotions were also recognized, both in participants themselves and also as seen in others during the Learning Delegations. Specifically, participants mentioned encounters in the graveyard, the morgue, the detention center, the courthouse, and at the Vigil. One enrollee said, “I think one of the points that I actually stood and cried when I let it all wash over me was when we walked through the graveyard and saw the graves of people who had died in the crossing” [Adam (PE)].



Figure 19: Photograph of a grave in the graveyard. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert. Used with permission.

At one point in the November, 2017 Learning Delegation, the group was praying at the wall and reflecting/reading a scriptural reference to welcoming the stranger. Later we realized that the Border Patrol Agent was listening to these reflections in her truck and was crying. In this way, a strong emotion was elicited in her as a result of just witnessing the Learning Delegation. This was recognized as an indirect action that could create change [Wendy (CE)].



Figure 20: Photograph of Border Patrol truck along the United States side of the wall.

Photographed by Ben (CE).

Used with permission.

In another story, an enrollee in her home community proudly wore a t-shirt from one of the local partners on the border and when her friend who was from that area saw it she just broke down and cried [Kate (CE)]. The enrollee was set back by this emotional response and felt bad for triggering such a strong reaction. It was difficult for some enrollees on the Learning Delegation to know what to do with such strong (and perhaps unexpected) emotions. Our facilitator/administrator noted that he had never seen such a reaction from the border patrol to a group at the wall.

These experiences helped foster relationships but they also helped foster empathy for others. At least six participants mentioned an increased sense of empathy as a result of the Learning Delegation. One enrollee described this in the following quote:

I think it just refreshes the idea, and it's easier to empathize and less easy for me to put that in the past and forget it. It is hard. It's so hard for so many people. I think, if

anything, just being empathetic or understanding a tiny bit more where someone is coming from [Wendy (CE)].

One enrollee said that the Learning Delegation helped her to open herself up to listen and connect more. Another agreed when he said:

When you know someone intimately and get to know them and love them and you care for them, all of a sudden it doesn't make sense to treat people in a racist way or in a very prejudice way. You look at things different" [Terry (CE)].

Yet another past enrollee reflected on the ways in which she could relate with the migrant experience:

Something happens when it's no longer statistics, and it's actually a human being with a name, that you've spoken to, that you've touched, physically, there's been an embrace or there's been a prayer or something happens where we have human connections. And I think part of it is easily you could switch roles. They could have been born in the U.S. the other person could have been born in El Salvador, or whatever. We didn't choose that part of our journey, right? We didn't choose to be born in those spaces, then how do we now become responsible for what we have? [Luisa (PE)].

Another enrollee reflected on his interaction with a man during a shared breakfast at a shelter for migrants when he said:

I could hardly wait to see who I would be sharing a meal across from, to meet and learn about someone with an experience different from anything I know. A reserved-looking man slowly and somewhat hesitantly made his way over to the space across from me, all the while his head bent and eyes lowered. The corners of his mouth were turned up ever so slightly, as if he had something to say but wouldn't say it...with a beautiful smile the

man replied that his name was Simon; but although warm, his smile expressed sadness, was one of disbelief. God, never let me forget his face. His eyes shone, reaching to faraway places both within his being and beyond to experience we can't see but that he will not be able to forget. My heart broke for Simon...Later we would learn that Simon had just been reported or rejected at the border, either way, having to leave his children behind. It was as if his entire soul and being had shrunk away from his body and had been absorbed by his eyes [R].

Another enrollee wrote about their encounter with a young man in a detention center:

As he got up and moved away, I caught a brief glimpse of his face, so young, barely transitioning from boy to man, shining with tears, before he shielded his face from our view. He could have been me, my friend, my classmate, my brother. I will never know his personal story, but he most likely was just trying to escape gang life or reach his family. To me, this man, so young and so clearly full of pain and suffering, should not be detained, and kept away from his family. For the umpteenth time that week, I questioned, why is OUR wall doing this in my name? Why and I so lucky, truly a lucky chance, to be born in the US into a comfortable financial situation and safe community? [R].

These reflections illustrate the ways in which enrollees were moved by storytelling and the shared experience of emotion, connection, empathy, and privilege.

For some, empathy was expressed through an actual shared experience. One enrollee had recently gained citizenship status in the United States and sat next to another young man who had recently been deported. The facilitator in that group said, "...he could see himself in that very space, and he himself had lived into that, and he had succeeded through the system, but

understood that very, very few people do” [Luisa (PE)]. Another facilitator was engaged in a conversation with a woman from Central America who was being deported and found that their family shared a common place of origin. These particular experiences struck a chord of connection that was perhaps even stronger than some of the others.

There were also several examples of how these relationships then contributed to what could be a solution to some of the issues surrounding migration. One conversation noted that in addition to data/facts, we also need the emotional connection to a story in the context of a trusted relationship. One facilitator noted, “You can’t have one without the other” [FN]. A second example was illustrated in a story that was told about people who had dramatically different ideas about migration. One facilitator told a story of a pastor who formed a strong friendship with a border patrol agent, despite the knowledge that they held deep disagreements on migration issues. Another enrollee told a story of a family who was very anti-immigrant, even racist, who donated a bed to a migrant family and shared a connection with them because they had both lost a loved one in a sudden way.

The relationships building and strong emotions that were evident on the Learning Delegations were actually named as an intentional strategy by the facilitators and administrators to help create changed attitudes and actions around migration issues. The included themselves in this strategy. At least four facilitators/administrators and three enrollees noted this strategy. The enrollees witnessed it in the ways the facilitators interacted with local partners and others on the Learning Delegation. One noted that the facilitators were “willing to look at people as human beings regardless of what they caught in their life” [Terry (CE)]. Another said, “You could tell that wherever we went, whether it was at the coffee place the people there loved them. That meant a lot to know they had built relationships with these people and it wasn’t just a show kind

of thing” [Stephanie (CE)]. Facilitators agreed that they did this intentionally. Some described relationship building as a key part of their work. One facilitator spent an entire month volunteering with local partners in order to care for those relationships. He said, “I need to increase that relationships more with them, and this is what I wanted to do...talk more, drink coffee, and just follow them to things that they do. I spent a week in each site working with them” [Jose (F/A)]. These relationships then extend beyond the Learning Delegations where facilitators and local partners are getting together for vacations and other visits. The same facilitator reflected on this when he said:

...I’m also feeling genuine relationships that I am not only benefiting from these relationships as well. And it’s not only for the benefit of North Americans or people in the United States, but it’s for the benefit also of people that we’re going to visit. So I try to keep those relationships and visits as genuine as I can. It’s one of the things that is really important for me” [Alex (F/A)].

They also mentioned that they want to transfer these relationship building skills and practices into local communities: “Most communities that people come from for Learning Delegations have migrants in them...how do we clarify that you don’t have to go to the border to encounter migrants, how do we prepare people to encounter migrants everyday?” [FN].

Strategies that Provided Opportunities for Advocacy and Action

Under this thematic category, there were two primary strategies that were highlighted. These were sometimes planned within the pedagogy of the Learning Delegation and sometimes they emerged spontaneously. The first one related to the opportunity to provide public education and/or advocacy about migration. The second one related to the provision tangible support or other actions as a way to assist migrant populations.

Education/Advocacy. For some learning delegation participants, the learning delegation itself served as a prompt for advocacy. One enrollee called it “...another way to sort of widen the congregation’s understanding of a mission...” [Ben (CE)]. Another said it “...infused a new urgency, new energy, and new ways of seeing...” [Andy (PE)]. The same enrollee gave an example of a member of their congregation who was a bilingual lawyer who hosted a workshop on preparedness related to deportations. Two past enrollees were involved in protests and community discussions regarding a new detention center in their area [James (PE)]. One past enrollee participated in a migration delegation to Washington, D.C. to advocate for migration rights [Mark (F/A)]. At least two recognized that their home communities or congregations are framed in a white supremacy or white privilege lens. [Terry CE].

Facilitators echoed this strategy. One stated, “I feel a lot of the time I like people to be able to envision what their future role...how do they see themselves working in the future, or even living back at home, to help change the unjust system” [Beth (F/A)]. One facilitator talked about the continuous work it is to create change in oppressive systems related to migration, including that fact that they have to work on multiple levels with varied knowledges and abilities. He illustrated this when he said in an interview:

...we have taken people all the way from being on square one to actually going to Washington, D.C. and advocating for change. And then knowing that at some point, you have to return to square one and work with people from the ground to build that, and that is a continuous work. It’s a circle [Alex (F/A)].

The stated hope/objective from the perspective of one facilitator was a “...hope people will do once they understand root causes and confronting false narratives...it is a part of speaking truth to power” [FN]. Another facilitator/administrator reflected on this strategy when they said:

We hope the transformation can move people to action...not just the discomfort but this will lead them to act on choices; moving them to be more hospitable; getting educated/sitting in discomfort is actually just getting a new perspective on things; if we show a documentary, people can choose to engage or not, but when you are actually visiting a person you are IN that experience and you cannot not notice/pay attention [FN].

Other enrollees belonged to churches that were already involved in advocacy surrounding migration issues. One enrollee described the Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s as an example of this work [Andy (PE)]. Two others described efforts in their community to work with local law enforcement and/or Immigration and Customs Enforcement in order promote dialogue and to initiate efforts to keep migrants in their community safe and cared for.

One enrollee stated that the anti-immigrant sentiment they saw in the media prompted them to try and get more involved:

It helps me as I deal with, for me personally, I deal with all the hatred that's coming across. Politics and even in our community, that can get me down...but for me the prescription is to get involved, and do just the opposite. I'm happier than a clam" [Terry (CE)].

Other comments validated the idea of going and "sitting in discomfort" and the important role this has in dismantling oppression.

We are looking for personal transformation that then will transform communities....we hope the transformation can move people to action—not just the discomfort but this will lead them to act on choices; moving them to be more hospitable; getting educated/sitting in discomfort is actually just getting a new perspective on things; if we show a

documentary, people can choose to engage or not, but when you are actually visiting a person you are in that experience and you cannot not notice or pay attention [FN].

Lisa (a past enrollee) said that she only wanted to do the Learning Delegation with people who had some degree of power or privilege and could come back and use that power to try and make a difference (i.e. attorneys or policymakers)” [Lisa (PE)].

Tangible Support. Providing tangible support for migrant populations is a strategy that is common among church communities. All of the participants in the Learning Delegation in November, 2017, were involved in this work at some level, either as an extension of their current work or as community volunteers. For example, one worked with a group in the United States to provide gift cards to undocumented people who were caught in a situation of forced labor. The group collaborated with a local deputy who would call when people needed immediate support and access the donated gift cards [Ben (CE)]. Data also indicated evidence of tangible support that was provided on the Learning Delegation, tangible support that was an extension of the Learning Delegation or inspired by the Learning Delegation, and the suggestion that tangible support is a strong way to respond to a comprehensive solution to anti-immigrant sentiment and social policies.

Both facilitators and enrollees discussed the value of engaging in tangible support while on the delegation. They gave examples of purchasing goods that supported a sustainable income for people on the border (coffee, handicrafts), serving food, putting water out in the desert, looking for lost migrants, caring for the physical needs of migrants, and donating money. One facilitator reflected on the power of these experiences for the Learning Delegation enrollees:

...it used to be very powerful to show up there and find women who had been returned, the border patrol would just return them and they would walk into the resource center as

we were sitting there visiting with a Learning Delegation and some of us happened to help pull thorns out from their hands or heal some of the wounds in the feet or things like that. So being able to experience some of that...was very powerful [Alex (F/A)].

This was, of course, more common when there was a high incidence of crossings. The same facilitator mentioned that when the group volunteered to make a meal for recent migrants, there were greater opportunities to listen to and share stories with migrants. This opportunity was limited, however, when the enrollees did not speak the same language as the migrant who had crossed [Mark (F/A)]. However, it did foster human connection.

At times this gesture of tangible support came out of a new understanding or awareness of the reality on the border. One facilitator shared a story of an enrollee who noticed a young child begging on the street and wanted to offer that child a granola bar, so she did. Later, the enrollee came to the facilitator crying and worried because she had not taken the time to consider if that child had allergies that would be affected by the granola bar. The facilitator noted, "...she was really upset, and I think it was just more here contrasting the reality of seeing all the need around her, that is this relentless and in her face, where she may be on an everyday basis with it...[Beth (F/A)].

As mentioned before, Learning Delegation local partners get paid a small stipend in order to host the enrollees [Alex (F/A)]. Sometimes this happens in the form of an "elevated price for lunch [Alex (F/A)] for the Learning Delegation, which helps the local partners raise money to provide other services to migrants at no cost. One of these lunches that we enjoyed was prepared by a women's collective that was formed in a recognition that groups of women needed to generate income in order to protect their livelihood:

This was a women's cooperative formed by a Quaker where they work on gardening, basic carpentry, and sewing as a way to generate income for the women in the community. They serve us a generous lunch of bistec ranchero, green salsa, beans, rice, melon juice, and fruit with sweetened condensed milk [FN].

During the lunch, the women explained that they had formed the adobo blocks for the humble structure themselves by forming 5000 adobe blocks by hand [FN]. Sometimes enrollees want to give more money, and they do so later by sending donations back after they have returned.

The Project Partner gets requests for people who want to do short term service work and focus on tangible support. However, while it may happen spontaneously on the trip, this is not the focus of the trip. "We tried to stress the learning component" [Luke (F/A)].

Several participants mentioned their involvement in tangible support as inspired by the Learning Delegation. This happened in the form of Advent⁷ donations for needed items (shoelaces and backpacks), by purchasing free trade goods like coffee or handicrafts, by coming back to the border region as a volunteer, and by voting or using political capital to ask for changes:

One of them {white pastor enrollee} that came on the journey with me. I have seen every one of them in different spaces. One of them, for example, did a press conference last year, when the Dreamers were first named as targets for deportation, and there was kind of an emergency call out to our city by our spiritual leaders, and so the local news came out, and one of our white pastors who had just been to the border took on that and said, 'I'm going to tell you what the challenges are,' and I was just extremely thrilled that

⁷ Advent is the time period in the Christian calendar that includes the four weeks leading up to Christmas.

publicly and openly he would stand and just name it as is, ‘This is an injustice.’ [Luisa (PE)].

The idea for the Advent collection began in the reflection time during the Learning Delegation when the enrollees were looking for ways to help after the presentation by the Border Patrol when they learned that those are the first two things (shoelaces and backpacks) that are confiscated upon apprehension. Another pastor reflected on how the Learning Delegation inspired more or even different tangible support in migration issues at home. He stated, “I’m in much more regular contact with the pastors of immigrant churches here in those kind of things” [Andy (PE)].

Several participants mentioned that they were inspired by the tangible support or humanitarian efforts they witness on the border that were being done by local partners. One said, “I was impressed by the number of organizations in the border areas that are humanitarian-oriented and that do quite different things. I didn’t know that there would be so many different kinds of organizations that do different things” [R]. There were many reflections that provided specific examples of this such as an organization that conducts needs assessment, emergency shelter, food, clothing, basic medical care, prison visitation, legal advocacy and defense, and assistance reconnecting with family members in the United States and elsewhere.

Chapter 6 gave an overview of insights that were generated through inductive data analysis. Enrollees and facilitators reflected on their ideas for the specific strategies which may or may not help shift perceptions about migration. These strategies included efforts to foster connections and collaborations, the presentation of diverse perspectives and storytelling to foster empathy, and ways to prompt motivation for enrollees to take action either through advocacy on

migration issues or through the provision of tangible support. The following Chapter will look at specific changes in attitudes and actions that were reported by the study participants.

Chapter Seven: Understanding Perspectives about Migration and Shifts in Attitudes and Actions Related to Migration

The thing is, borders and the whole system of immigration policy can be infected by our fears and our greed and our privilege, and we begin to dehumanize the other. And we hear in that political discourse—Mexicans—they're rapists, they bring drugs, they're corrupt, they're vile. So we live in a time of parting borders. People are desperate. Families are divided. Migrants are dying in the desert. And many of us here are citizens of a country—the US that creates and enforces these immigration policies [R].

It's those stories, it's the actual opportunity of listening and not reading it somewhere, or not hearing it third hand, but sitting and just meeting the very people who have been deported a number of times, or who are on their way north who have a bit more idealistic view of what life will be up north. To me, it's being entrusted with that sacred story that is the most transformational part of the trip...something happens when it's no longer statistics, and it's actually a human being with a name, that you've spoken to, that you've touched, physically, there's been an embrace or there's been a prayer or something happens where we have human connections [Luisa (PE)].

The first quote illustrates the thoughts and attitudes of one enrollee who was contemplating the learning he gained on the Learning Delegation and perhaps the new understandings that contributed to his understanding of migration issues at the United States/Mexico border. The second quote illustrates Luisa's experience of transformation through the experience of human connection. The design of this research was to provide a full description of the case (learning delegation), rather than a clean and quantifiable pre/post test in order to measure changes in enrollees. Still, in order to get a complete description, it was

important to ask the study participants about migration and the social and political issues that surround such a complex global phenomenon before, during, and after their experience in the learning delegation (Chapter 5). In Chapter 6, strategies for shifting perceptions and motivating actions related to migration were discussed. This final Chapter of Findings includes an overview of the perceptions and values about migration that were held by the study participants, and an overview of the ways in which study participants expressed that their attitudes or actions had changed by their experiences on the Learning Delegation. The first part of this Chapter will explore their overall perceptions and values related to migration followed by their descriptions of any transformation or change in their attitudes or their plans or intentions to engage in actions related to migration they experienced as a result of their experience on the Learning Delegation.

Perspectives About Migration

Research participants were asked to give a general overview of their views about migration at the U.S./Mexico border. The resulting data from this question, combined with participatory observation data and related reflections or informal interviews produced the findings in three main areas: their perspective related to politics, migration, and the border; their perspective on difference, specifically race/ethnicity, privilege, religion, and identity, and the values that guide their understanding of migration and the relationship between Self and Other.

Perspectives on politics, migration, and the border. Participants discussed three related topics that revealed their perspectives on politics, migration, and the border. Current enrollees were asked questions about their perspective prior to going as well as after they returned from the Learning Delegations. The responses (in addition to responses from facilitators/administrators and past enrollees) were then reviewed to look for changes. The

following section outlines several different categories of ideas expressed by participants that described their perspective on these issues.

Political Perspectives. Both facilitators/administrators and enrollees recognized several issues related to the political perspectives. First, at least six enrollees in addition to several facilitators/administrators recognized a U.S. political climate of anti-immigrant sentiment, especially with the current Administration. One younger participant who was born in the 90s recognized that they have lived their entire lives in the context of this anti-immigrant public narrative. One facilitator/administrator expressed anxiety because of anti-immigration legislation that was being proposed on a daily or weekly basis, and there was no way to know what might be coming next from the Trump Administration.

Participants also noted the increase in political rhetoric that demanded for a wall or more permanent barrier to block unauthorized migration. They expressed concern regarding the border region but also in the local regions where they live. For example, people they knew and worked with were unable to get driver's licenses because they could not show a proof of citizenship [Stephanie (CE)].

They also recognized that there was a need for more accurate information and effective advocacy. Terry (a current enrollee) illustrated this perspective about politics and migration:

I don't think our culture has all the information they need....when I talk to my neighbors about the issues surrounding immigration, there seems to be a lot of misinformation, or only half the information. Decisions are made on a lack of real understanding what is really factual. We are so polarized in politics right now, and especially from the more conservative side, the idea that the immigrants are taking our jobs and all the

misinformation there. Well, that's not really true, but that's all you hear is from one perspective [Terry (CE)].

Stephanie agreed when she made the following comment about politics and migration when she said, "we need to fix this whole mess" [Stephanie (CE)].

Several participants mentioned that there are churches that perpetuate anti-immigrant sentiment. One past enrollee mentioned a Christian church that was made up of approximately 50% Trump supporters. The congregation was planning an immigration forum to help educate the church on these issues. At the last minute, the forum was cancelled due to the fact that the topic might be considered too divisive or political for the church to take on. Study participants expressed a desire for faith-based groups to be involved in an alternative, welcoming political narrative. Several participants mentioned the role of the church in these political issues, specifically related to counter-storytelling, advocacy, and social change. Luisa (a past enrollee) said that it was the responsibility of the church to counter the narrative that is spread by social media or the news (which is very negative). She thought that the Learning Delegation was a good way to approach this dilemma:

[the Learning Delegation is an]...opportunity of telling the story to people who are interested in hearing it, and who have some power of vote or influence and who are giving ear to an issues that is not popular, and especially in today's political climate, I think that is seen as a responsibility and an honor and a collaborative partnership and a real, a real place of hopefully transformation [Luisa (PE)].

Ben (a current enrollee) also suggested that the Learning Delegation can help faith communities engage in work to promote more tolerant migration policies:

So for me it's another way to sort of widen the congregation's understanding of a mission to include, you know, political engagement and advocacy on behalf of those folks...countries are countries because they have borders. So, that's just an inherent element. And so trying to navigate that duality...you're gonna have immigration policies, but they can be fueled by fear or they can be fueled by mercy and justice and compassion. So, how do we advocate for mercy, justice, and compassion? [Ben (CE)]

Both Ben and Luisa are pastors of churches who are directly involved in migration work.



Figure 21: Photograph of a mural in Mexico of Jesus stopping President Trump and the Border Patrol. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Finally, there was a keen awareness of colonialism from both enrollees and facilitators/administrators. Luisa used the concept of colonialism as a way to explain anti-immigrant sentiment in politics:

...they [people who hold anti-immigrant sentiment] only exert this power because they don't understand their own narrative of even the land that was stolen by their own

ancestors....we don't understand our native land, the massacres of our own folks, and our history, the oppression that was created for us to seek out this religious freedom that really is a bunch of baloney. It's all about economic power and land....racism is not an issue they want to dive into, because it's going to address some areas of their own lives that they don't want to dive into, because it's going to address some areas of their own lives that they don't want to let go of power, or immigration is not something that they're really open to, because they're pretty set on their perspective of, y'know, where the law is the law, and are not interested in understanding the broader sense of how we got to this law, who made the law, who's imposing the law? And all of those are issues of injustice [Luisa (PE)].

Facilitators/administrators also expressed some element of colonialism in the enrollees' political perspectives. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

...people don't see it in themselves. They [the enrollees] don't understand the impact that their power has. Most people who come don't know the history of how North Americans have interacted with people throughout Latin America for years and years and years... [John (F/A)].

And another said, "What's happening in the history of our country as far as being a colonial power and how many people we've affected by that and it's like, 'Well, I can't change the whole country, but at least I can be decent to some folks'" [Barbara (F/A)].

Perspectives on migration. The perspectives of study participants related to migration and the border mirrored their perspectives on the political climate related to migration in general. They all felt like the current U.S. policies were too restrictive of migration, that generally there as a need for more understanding and information about the causes and consequences of

migration, and that they felt like in addition to information, there is a need for storytelling, relationship-building, and mutual aid that can foster a deeper (more than intellectual) understanding and empathy for migrant needs.

The study participants felt that more information was needed about the root causes of migration from Central America and Mexico. One current enrollee said, "...I mean you hear a lot of arguments in the news about how they're taking our jobs, or they're gonna undermine the economy..." [Ben (CE)]. Or, "People think all the Hispanic people who are from Central America wanna do is migrate to the United States and take everybody's job. But that's not the goal...the goal is to have a life they can live" [R]. Wendy, a current enrollee who works with migrant populations said:

...it's not just that they're coming for money but they're coming because their sister or their mom or dad was murdered and they're afraid for their own life...people are fleeing such dangerous situations, and they're pinned as criminals for being here. Or, our system makes it so hard for them to stay here legally that it's easier to just not go to their court hearing and just stay because they don't have money for a lawyer to help them with their asylum case [Wendy (CE)].

Another talked about the ways in which migrants are dehumanized, even treated like animals: "It's just you got that feeling that we're not talking about people..." [Terry (CE)]. Likewise, there is a lack of information about the contributions that migrant populations make in local communities [FN].

Changes in migration. Others noted the ways in which migration has shifted. For example, John (F/A) mentioned the increase in restrictiveness and "political traction" since the last major era of deportation with the Bracero program (program implemented by President

Eisenhower that resulted in the mass deportation of Mexican workers from the United States to Mexico). Or, the reduced use of “La Bestia” (term used to describe the train that many migrants travel on from the Southern to Northern borders of Mexico) because of increased militarization and danger and the increased involvement of the cartel in monitoring and negotiating border crossings [R]. Data from the field notes during visits to local partners also indicated that there is an increase in numbers of human rights organizations, and that while numbers of people who cross the border are down, the numbers of deaths in the desert are up [R]. The reasons for these deaths could be connected to the wall acting as a deterrent in urban areas so migrants are forced to cross into more dangerous areas and more people die in their attempts. Another current enrollee compared contemporary migration to that of their ancestors:

I feel anger because I feel like my ancestors were allowed to come and weren't nice to the people that lived here, and here we say these people can't be here...it's not like they've left because they want to come here and get rich, they just wanna live happy lives [Kate (CE)].

Another enrollee said their frustration with the system of migration was heightened after the learning delegation [Ben (CE)]. They said, “Every country is going to have some kind of immigration system. The fact that ours is fueled by such fear and violence, and frankly untruths, is deeply troubling [Ben (CE)].” This frustration was expressed in the context of feeling trapped politically where there is a President and a Congress who are not supportive of migrant rights. Lisa said that she was not able to have a complete view of migration until she herself moved to Latin America:

...I think coming here, doing what we were doing along the border we...kind of shifting my perspective a little bit—just understanding why people migrate...and a little bit of

what the realities are, how US policies affect people in the Northern Triangle and Mexico and why they are leaving. And so, I guess I never really had had the exposure to pay that much attention to that side of the story when I was living in the U.S [Lisa (PE)].

Andy agreed with her when he spoke to the subtlety, yet importance of that experience:

We all have our perspective. So we are all responding in some ways to this reality. The opportunity to go to the border broadens that pool of things-the experiences we have that shape how we respond to this community. So if we can expand it beyond our stereotypes and prejudices to some learned real life physical experiences, that's an important thing [Andy (PE)].

Some participants had developed a more positive view of migration due to their participation on the Learning Delegation. One enrollee said, "There's a deeper sense in which we're all connected..." [Ben (CE)]. Or, regarding Latinx people in their community: "...it's really neat to see how they are part of the community and some of them have offices or leadership in the community..." [Stephanie (CE)]. Another expressed admiration at the relationships they have with people who have migrated who "exude a feeling of joy" [Kate (CE)]. And another said, "I look at success totally differently—it is the resilience, people who move on and persist through difficulty" [FN]. One facilitator/administrated talked of the local partner that helps with sustainable economic growth for migrants from the Southern border of Mexico—"...it's just a ray of hope of people staying home..." [Alex (F/A)].

Others mentioned the storytelling, relationship building, and mutuality as the key components of a changed perspective on migration. Suzanne (a past enrollee) illustrated how her friendships took priority over immigration status:

...it's the stories. It's the personal relationships...It's when somebody is going to the church that you go to, and you respect them, and after having been their friend, or at least knowing them, and appreciating them for five years you find out that they're not documented and you say 'what the hell?' y'know? I have all these preconceptions about undocumented people and you just blew them all to smithereens [Suzanne (PE)].

One facilitator made the connection between storytelling and mutuality, and how that form of relationship building fosters trust, especially when the facilitator themselves have lived experience of migration:

...there is this deep care for people who are in migration. So that's coming from my faith perspective, that is one, and then the other one is as a person who has been uprooted, then there is a certain compassion and passion I feel for people who are migrating and knowing what that feels like to support people in that process. As much as I can. And then bringing their stories to the front so more people will know what it feels like, especially in a time when we're being pushed to be very anti-immigrant [Alex (F/A)].

Perspectives on the border and the Border Patrol. One of the more unexpected and poignant elements of the learning delegation was being close to the border wall and talking with border patrol agents who are responsible for “catching” migrants when they attempt unauthorized crossings. Most of the enrollees in the learning delegation mentioned this part of their experience as important and insightful.

Perspectives on the border wall. For some, being close to the border (in-context), even seeing the wall itself made a difference. For example, Alex (F/A) told a story about a past enrollee who was skeptical about migration when they came on a learning delegation:

...he was very conservative, had this idea of the border, these people were just coming through and it was totally open and no law, nothing. And that we needed more security, more border patrol, all that stuff...by the time he comes to the border and first encounter with the wall, his words were, 'this is so childish.' He was very confused about that because he had a very different perspective of what was happening at the border [Alex (F/A)].

The proximity to the wall and the frequency of crossing also reminded enrollees of how different it was from other borders (like the northern border of the United States). They attributed some of this difference to similar racial and economic contexts. For example Ben, who was a white, Canadian past enrollee said, "Some borders are different, different because of economic inequities....there's probably some inherent racism too...Canadians are white. They speak English. They look like us, they're nice people. So I 'm sure there are some racial overtones too" [Ben (CE)].

Being close to the wall also shed light on the problems that exist along the border communities. For example, there is a much higher rate of drug abuse and addiction near the border. Luisa (a past enrollee) once again brought up the bigger picture of the impact of drugs and drug addiction on migration policy:

We are constantly processing the drugs, the traffickers here, and we never think about how does this addiction from North America, US, affect the very people who are in a space where things are getting transported? And then you realize, you get to see it's completely affecting people who get caught up in the supply of this, in a country that they should never have been there [Luisa (PE)].

Adam (a past enrollee) reflected on the impact these crossings have on neighborhoods and communities along the border:

[I have]...become more aware of how many different communities are built on the border where this wall can intersect and interrupt a neighborhood even. Or you can have streets on both sides....there's communities there along the border, but also people live in them [Adam (PE)].

In addition, the more of a barrier the wall has become, there is an increased market for smugglers and cartel members to get involved in getting people across, which increases risk [R].

Several enrollees and facilitators/administrators noted that the wall was unnecessary and/or ineffective. This sentiment was illustrated by Michael's (past enrollee) reflection:

...people say this is criminal...they violated the law, but it is like a speeding ticket, is it a criminal offense? Yeah, we have to somehow manage border security, but can we be realistic about the need in our economies and these people? I think I believed many of those things before this trip, but I think I can probably articulate them better after the trip...when I hear our president talk about the different wall designs and blah blah blah it doesn't matter what the wall is like, people are going to find a way over and under it" [Michael PE].

As a part of the learning delegations, enrollees had the opportunity to do a border infrastructure tour where they visited different types of barrier structures with degrees of security along the border on both sides. Some people were particularly taken by the physical aspects of the wall, including the aesthetics. Aesthetically, there was a stark difference between the U.S. and Mexican sides. The Mexican side was covered in intricate murals and laden with flowers, trees and memorabilia. There was exercise and park equipment along the wall in order to make it a

more friendly public place to be. One facilitator said that the Mexicans were not going to let the wall take the beauty out of their community [FN]. They would not let it define them [R].



Figure 22: Photograph of the border wall on the Mexico side with exercise equipment.

Photographed by Terry (CE).

Used with permission.

On the United States' side, there was just a dirt road, rusty iron bars or metal fences, and evidence of surveillance equipment. John (a facilitator/administrator) mentioned his perception of the wall on the United States side.

Sometimes when I go to the wall, it feels like I am in jail. When I approach it on the US side. We call ourselves the land of the free and the brave, but we've locked ourselves inside a mask or wall of fear that undermines both freedom and courage and joy. But I cross that border and find wonderful people who come up to me and hug me [R].



Figure 23: Photograph of the border wall on the United States side. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Ben (a current enrollee) wrote the following description of the wall:

Beyond the city limits the double fence ends and that single iron fence extends out for several miles into the desert, and the border patrol will tell you that the purpose isn't actually to stop migrants, the purpose is to slow them down so they can apprehend them. Border patrol have cars, cameras, drones, high flying planes, they have pressure sensors built into the desert floor, and by their estimates they apprehend about 80% of the people who cross the border. A few miles further out, the fence ends. You can see where it ends, and it becomes a car barrier, and so you can see the pieces of iron that are crossed over, and it extends all the way out...it is meant to stop vehicles....they want it to be hard to cross over there where someone can blend into the population there. What they want to do is push people further out into the desert. The desert can be very beautiful. It can also be a very harsh terrain. It is vast, it is arid, it can be hot and very cold. It was

dangerous. The policy is called Prevention Through Deterrence. It is a lot easier to cross out in the desert, but it is very dangerous. So the desert is used by the border patrol as a lethal deterrent. And it is lethal. Many migrants die in the desert, but it does not deter very well. People continue to cross over [R].



Figure 24: Photograph of the border barrier farther out from town. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Other participants were moved by the planned and spontaneous experiences at the wall, including storytelling, prayer, and walking along the wall and finding lost belongings of migrants who had attempted to cross (such as a baby bottle or a laminated list of phone numbers/family contacts). In a reflection, one enrollee described a spontaneous sharing of stories across the border when a young man in Mexico told his story to the learning delegation group on the U.S. side:

...our groups joined hands and Juan reached his hand through the fence to take mine, completing the circle. For a moment, we pray together, both north and south of the

border, as if the wall were not there separating us at all. We are united despite the massive metal structure between us. Before we leave, Juan says to us, ‘I wish I could be there with you.’ We can hear just how deep that desire is, and how impossible it is in that moment. I do not know if or when Juan will return to the United States. For me, Juan is the image of the border that I bring back in my mind. The ugly metal wall is there, yes, but so are the inviting hands reaching through it. May we continue to stretch our hands through these walls [R].

Finally, seeing the actual wall prompted a challenge or reminded participants of their responsibility to seek changes and take action to address migration policy in the United States:

Our week at the border has shaken me. We were challenged on several occasions to realize that this wall is being enforced in our name, we as U.S. citizens, even we as [name of denominational group] I’m not comfortable with that. So now, it is my responsibility to learn; to read every article and book, watch every documentary, and meet as many people as possible to learn and internalize the stories of our migrant brothers and sisters who sustain wounds from our wall [FN].



Figure 25: Photograph of enrollees praying at the wall. Photographed by Wendy (CE).

Used with permission.

These reflections indicate that the wall is more than a physical structure. It has a great deal of symbolism and can prompt strong emotions about who does or does not belong, who is or is not allowed, and the stories and experiences of those who try to cross over.

Reflections about the border patrol. In addition reflections about the wall, often the learning delegations get the opportunity to interact with and learn about border patrol agents, but informally and in formal settings. The current learning delegation enrollees met with the Community Liaison Team of the border patrol to hear about their work and ask questions, and they also shared an informal dinner with a community member who had worked for the border patrol for almost two decades. The intent of their role, from their perspective was to protect the United States from terrorism and to save lives. They shared examples with our group of people they had apprehended who were near dead or starving, and they highlighted these stories with pride. They explained the difference between their job and the Customs and Border Patrol Agents, who monitor the ports of entry. Several enrollees mentioned these interactions as

helpful for them. They mentioned it gave them a different viewpoint about the people who work for the border patrol than perhaps they had before (from previous assumptions or the media). It helped to humanize the people who worked for the border patrol.

However, some recognized the irony in that effort when the purpose of the border patrol themselves was to dehumanize:

I was struck that it is in the nature of their job to dehumanize people who are crossing the border. I asked them about the language they use, and the terms they use whenever they spot someone is a 'body' so they will look through their binoculars and they're radio they will say 'I see three bodies,' or 'I need back-up. There are five bodies.' Bodies. The nature of their job—the nature of the system is to dehumanize [Ben (CE)].

In these interactions, they also talked about “catching them” or getting “bragging rights” if there was a drug apprehension or big groups. In addition to the candid conversations the group had about the apprehension of migrants, there was also information shared about the context of the job itself. Many border patrol agents work by themselves all day long. It is a high stress job, with many spikes of adrenaline. As a result, many border patrol agents cannot work very long, and suffer from mental health issues. The rate of suicide is very high [FN]. The training and demands on the job are difficult. Demands for women are even higher because there are very few female employees and if they have children then have to leave them in childcare for 12 hours at a time. Sometimes it is difficult to even find a private place to go to the bathroom. Most commute one or more hours away and only about 15% live in the community where they work because it is too hard when you know the people you are working to deport or restrict [FN]. In their description of their work, they appeared to be talking about tracking animals.

These talks left the group in a somber mood. It was clear that the facilitator's request for the group to humanize all aspects of the border was challenging in this unexpected interaction:

...these people were involved in activities that I don't support. And so, the primary benefit was for me to just humanize them and realize that they have their own issues and struggles and they go home at night to their wives and that sort of thing. And that they struggle to justify what they're doing. This one border patrol agent mentioned that in the last eight years there was one person that he apprehended that was a murderer. And presumably that helped to justify his apprehension of all mothers who were innocent that were trying to leave there with their families and so forth. So yeah, that was helpful. But also helpful to learn for me [James (PE)].

This was an unexpected element of the Learning Delegation, and a rich one. It was helpful for James to listen openly to the experiences of the border patrol agents and understand a bit of the challenges they face on the job. Similar to military personnel, their training and role can be harmful to themselves personally as well as those with whom they work.

Perspectives on race/ethnicity, privilege, religion, and identity. The data from this study also provided some interesting perspectives related to difference and awareness of self and others. These responses were synthesized into the following areas: Perspectives on race/ethnicity, perspectives on class or money, perspectives on religion/faith, and perspectives about self and others. Each of these areas provided insight into the ways in which the study participants were processing information about identity and difference, and how these perspectives intersected with their experiences on the Learning Delegation.

Perspectives on race/ethnicity. Several enrollees thought that their experience on Learning Delegations helped expose racism in a way that they did not see before. For one it was

just a better understanding of stereotypes and for another the racial divides were more apparent in a different cultural context. For another, they reflected on their own ancestral history of migration:

After all, they saw America as the Promised Land, a gift from God. And like other peoples in other countries and other times, all they had to do was to dehumanize the people pushed out...and not think about them too much. They were not really human, not really worthy of respect and love [R].

One facilitator noted that the enrollees have encountered people who are not thrilled about meeting with white northerner, and this brings a sense of the impact of colonization and oppressive practices [Beth (F/A)].

Others felt like it helped them to have a new perspective on race or ethnicity in their home contexts. For example, if they had grown up in a small homogenous community, they found that the experience gave them a more humanized view of people with darker skin. Or, it made them question every day practices or rituals in their home communities that favor white traditions or practices (i.e. the way music is in their church) [Terry (CE)]. They felt like these practices perpetuated racism. One participant even reflected that it is worse when you live in an area where there are many immigrants, yet there is a rejection of responsibility for white supremacy or even recognition of any problems by larger social institutions (i.e. church) [Luisa (PE)].

Ben also recognized the fact that their Learning Delegation was planned and led by white northerners, and that there was no direct input provided by a recent migrant. However, they reflected that “I’m not really quite sure how that would have been incorporated in an appropriate way” [Ben (CE)]. This sentiment was also reflected in the administrator/facilitator perspective.

There is usually positive feedback when the facilitator has lived experience with migration themselves:

So my upbringing, the background that I link to this I think has influenced the learning delegations. It has been excellent to be also, to have this language. Because I am also a translator. Interpreter. So then that has also been a gift...” [Alex (F/A)].

Another white facilitator expressed their gratitude for the connections they have built with local partners. One said, “And those relationships [with local partners] are wonderful. I mean we love being here. And part of why we love it is that those relationships were already established, that it easy for us to become a part of, and to find a place for us to have relationships in the whole network” [FN]. Another facilitator stated that the only time they hear a concern about being sensitive or careful about asking for stories, that concern has come from a North American person, not a migrant” [Alex (F/A)].

One facilitator reflected on her past experience working at a small college. She felt like the context of private, Christian higher education limited access to racial/ethnic, even class difference, and that without exposure to these differences, there is less effective preparation for the “reality of our world” [Luisa (PE)]. Therefore, the Learning Delegations were important in exposing this reality. Another facilitator felt somewhat uncomfortable when the majority of Learning Delegation enrollees were white: “I guess what makes me uncomfortable is the zoo feeling, is us going and looking at them...” [Beth (F/A)]. This discomfort is a very important consideration when looking at Learning Delegations as a potential form of voyeurism.

Perspectives on class or money. Study participants also shared some interesting perspectives related to class or money. Sometimes these comments related to the cost and use of

funds on the Learning Delegation itself and some related to a larger awareness of shared economies and personal privilege.

Local partners receive some kind of financial compensation for their role in the Learning Delegations. This is intentionally done in order to prevent what one facilitator called “poverty tourism” in that they see it as an exchange [John (F/A)]. But, it can also be complicated when negotiated through a third party, and they need to navigate these relationships carefully to be sure that local partners do not feel used or exploited. Sometimes, the Learning Delegation participants are put in a position where they have to accept a gesture of hospitality (without payment) and not return it with a financial gift. This can be really uncomfortable [Barbara (F/A)]. One facilitator reflected on the responses of enrollees to this kind of situation: “I’ve seen people say, ‘I don’t know how to respond to that’ or ‘what can I do?’ [and I say] Well, you don’t have to do anything. You just have to accept their hospitality and follow their example of how they are raising their children. You don’t have to do anything” [Barbara (F/A)]. Sometimes a group may send a donation to a local partner after they return to the United States, or purchase their goods on a regular basis.

Four participants indicated that the Learning Delegation prompted an understanding of the impact of migrants on the economy in the US and Mexico. The demand for sustainable economic opportunities within Mexico was clearly illustrated by part of the Learning Delegation. There were also insights from enrollees who were construction workers, farmers, and foodies that indicated an awareness of the demand for labor that has been cheapened for particular groups of people in the United States:

...if you’re serious about opposing illegal immigration or migrants coming to our country, then you need to stop eating lettuce, you need to stop eating strawberries, you

need to stop eating anything that's been on a farm in California because who do you think is picking those. If you complain about the price of these foods, well, then let's send all the migrant workers home, and see how much it really costs [Michael (PE)].

One participant even mentioned the cost of efforts to restrict and prosecute migrants. Or, that they enjoyed the fact that they could get shoes and other goods at a cheap price, but now understood that those same structures that allowed them to get cheap shoes also perpetuated poverty in Mexico [Luisa (PE)]. They also mentioned that some participants are pushed out of their comfort zone when they see indications of poverty that perhaps they had not seen before [Alex (F/A)]. These reflections indicated an awareness of the larger systemic issues that fuel migration.

Perspectives on religion. Most participants in this study reflected the ways in which religious perspectives interact with their views on migration. These reflections fell before, during, and after the Learning Delegation. Andy, a past enrollee who was also a pastor discussed the importance of engagement beyond learning facts:

How do we change minds? How are we impacted in a way that takes root in us? I think that's, what theologically is maybe how do our concern about people who live in places where violence and exploitation is happening, how do those become real situations and real people to us that we can see that of God in them, without being physically in those places, and smelling those smells, and shaking the hands, and laughing and crying at the stories... These other things that I can learn about immigration policy back home are things that happened in the head. And I think there's something, I think something much more powerful happens when you impact both the head and the heart. So that's in part

what I mean by going to these places, when the heart is impacted it can reorient one, and that's what I mean by conversion [Andy (PE)].

Their responses fell into four main areas of reflection: (a) how migration issues are the work of the church; (b) the ways in which migration issues fall into the mission of the church; (c) the ways in which religion, spirituality, or faith built connections across divides, and (d) religious perspectives or interpretations about migration.

Five different participants (three facilitators/administrators and two enrollees) described how migration work is a key element of the work of the church. This included incorporating stories and experiences into worship services/prayer, getting involved with activism, and the need to not just talk about issues but to “go and see and touch and feel what's happening at the border [Alex (F/A)]. Three others mentioned the importance of “living out my faith” [Barbara (F/A); Wendy (CE); R]. And another talked about how the work is a continuous circle of “working with people from the ground” and getting them out advocating for change [Alex (F/A)].



Figure 26: Photograph of a mural in Mexico depicting Jesus riding with migrants on “La Bestia.” Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Others participants felt that migration-related education and advocacy should be a larger mission of the church. There was sentiment in both field notes and interviews that the learning delegations are designed as an alternative to missionary work—that they (Learning Delegations) “flips the script” on missionary work where the people coming into the local context do not go to teach or impose anything but instead they go to learn and later act on behalf of the injustices they see. Luisa was passionate about this idea:

...the idea of a learning delegation is one of mutual transformation, and as Westerners, we don’t need to do any more missionary work. We need to be going, and we need to be transformed. The problem of global inequity lies within our own spaces” [Luisa (PE)].

Andy agreed with her on the mission of the church as it encourages participation in learning delegations:

...encourage folks to take advantage of learning delegations that go to places of war, or conflicts. With an assumption that those are the things that are places of conversion for us. For those of us who live in safe places that are far from conflict. But to be a peace church, to be following this witness that we see in the teachings in the life of Jesus, you can't do that as well just from your living room and reading, you have to kind of rub elbows with real life people and see these things for yourself. And that's how it gets inside of you [Andy (PE)].

Another enrollee reflected on the necessity of borders and boundaries, which are less relevant in religion than government. Therefore, the role of the church is to change the narrative and make these places that embody “mercy, justice, and compassion” [Ben (CE)]. Because of the important role of the church in this topic, there was a desire reflected for more pastors to participate in learning delegations, because “if they themselves become transformed, then more likely their congregations and their community becomes transformed” [Luisa (PE)]. And, when they do not address migration issues in their role as pastors, “they don't understand the barriers that they create” [Luisa (PE)]. The role of the church is also to bear witness, according to these participants, like what is done every Tuesday evening at the Vigil along the border. And, one pastor expressed his desire to make the church a place of persistent and open welcome. This does not end at welcoming individuals and families. It is also absolutely crucial for the church to be involved in understanding and addressing structural issues of inequality and injustice.

Several participants provided examples of how religious content or process helped build connections across divides (including the wall). For example, there were a couple examples of when a learning delegation group was praying or reading scripture at the wall and someone from the other side (or someone in the Border Patrol) asked what they were doing and then proceeded

to join them in these actions [R, FN]. These religious impressions were left from all sides. For example, John reflected:

I think people frequently get a sense from the people they meet...of how much faith they have. And I think that that really impresses people. Because many of the people that they meet live their faith in a really different way from the way people in the U.S. live theirs. And I think people oftentimes sense that and come away like with kind of a “wow” kind of experience” [John (F/A)].

There is an expressed desire for more people who have more conservative political and religious perspectives to attend the learning delegations. However, the facilitators recognize this would put people in odd positions. Some, through connections and with persuasion have agreed to participate. For example, when a personal invitation is made and when funds are provided for them to attend, there have been instances where they agree to go.



Figure 27: Photograph of a cross on the Mexico side of the wall. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

The last area included religious perspectives or interpretations about migration. Several of the respondents called for a counter approach to restrictive immigration policies. One reflected poignantly, "...we humans are a wall-building species who worship a wall-destroying God" [Ben (CE)]. Several others expressed the sentiment that their own religious perspective did not include a notion of national boundaries or other boundaries that keep people out. This was reflected in the citation of specific parts of biblical teachings (i.e. Jesus calling us to welcome the stranger/welcome the alien/care for the poor; Matthew 25), as well as in expressed values of hospitality and universal love and acceptance. James (a past enrollee) cited the Bible in his perspective about xenophobia:

...apart from immigration policy, I think the Bible was clear that justice and love for the neighbor calls for being generous with people from other countries and ethnic backgrounds....so, it seems to me that xenophobia is markedly countered in the biblical witness" [James (PE)].

Andy (another past enrollee) agreed with him and asserted his religious calling to connect with those who live on the other side of the border:

...I think every human being is a person of God, made in God's image. And I think that when people honor that part of them, and come together; and in our case, in a faith community, and reflect on what is this part of me that is infused with God's spirit mean, and what does that mean in relationship to my sisters and brothers around the world and along the border. When there are people who are trying to live into that sense of who they are, they are kind of actively living out being people of God. Then in the midst of that kind of work and focus there is pain, but there's joy, and there's hope, and there's

community, there's connection both with each other and with something beyond us as well [Andy (PE)].

One unexpected element in the theme of religion was the tension that was felt when a Border Patrol agent or detention center guard claimed the same religious perspective as many of the learning delegation enrollees (Christian). This generated some interesting discussions and prompted some discomfort in the group. Wendy, who worked directly with migrants who had been treated poorly by the Border Patrol reflected on this tension:

I think that challenged me more and has stuck with me of this idea of humanizing all people on the border and especially knowing that he's a Christian. I don't know. That stuck with me that there are Christians with so many different viewpoints and we're using our own viewpoints to do God's will in our eyes... [Wendy (CE)].

At the same time, one Border Patrol Agent recognized that it is hard for him to do the job and also be a Christian. So, there was evidence that people with dramatically different viewpoints about migration policy could profess the same faith and also hold this tension. Participants also felt that tension and paradox during the Sunday morning church service where they were worshiping in a local church and sharing a post-worship meal alongside several Border Patrol Agents as well as undocumented community members. And they knew about one another, and formed friendships with one another, and shared a potluck meal together [FN].

There is a great deal of diversity in opinion across Christian denominations and congregations related to migration. For example, in the small border town, our facilitator recognized that in one intersection there were four different churches, all of whom has different theology and different levels of involvement in migration issues. Another enrollee reflected on

how a local church in her area had cancelled a talk they had planned related to migration because they were “afraid that we were going to bring a liberal agenda to the congregation” [Luisa (PE)].

Perspectives about self and others. Enrollees expressed the varied ways in which the Learning Delegation prompted them to learn about themselves. For some, this involved their ability and willingness to genuinely listen to stories. One enrollee mentioned that she wanted to be a better listener when others returned from an impactful experience. Another mentioned that she felt like she was more adaptable when in the presence of people who speak two different languages.

For others, it gave them a heightened sense of frustration and/or sense of responsibility to take action on behalf of migrant populations [Ben (CE)]. One mentioned that the experience was quite emotional for them and that affected their passion for advocacy and “making our immigrant community feel at home here...so anyway making a trip gave me...strength, gave me a little bit more...willingness to speak out and talk a little bit more educated on the issues” [Terry (CE)]. Another said that even though they had visited the border before and felt very educated about border issues, “...each time that you go back the pictures in your mind, the experiences, they layer on top of each other after awhile in a beneficial and helpful way” [Andy (PE)]. One participant reflected that the Vigil was a good place to put some of that feeling of needing to do something, “you get to kind of almost pay your respects, I guess” [Mark (F/A)] and it helps them imagine future actions.

There were a couple participants who mentioned their understanding of their role on and off of the Learning Delegation. For example, one felt a conflict between their professional role and their role as a participant on the Learning Delegation, specifically at the visit to the detention center and the vigil. They took time to clarify with their employer the purpose of the delegation

and to separate these roles. Another North American facilitator felt somewhat conflicted about their role in Latin America and thought the learning delegation was a good opportunity for them to have a helpful (and non-invasive) role [Stephanie (CE)]. One facilitator said the work is never ending and stressful, and they are sometimes overwhelmed with the decisions about where to focus their energy [Alex (F/A)].

And finally, there were several participants (enrollees and facilitators) who mentioned an awareness of privilege, divisions, and or systemic issues that contribute to larger global and economic forces that impact migration. Terry (a current enrollee) illustrated how he did not even know the extent of his own privilege:

I don't think we hear the truth. I don't think we understand as a society the effect that immigrants have on our own community, and we don't appreciate what their culture brings to our culture, and the privilege we have as Americans and have in our documents, and order, and how that affects people that don't have that and how they're oppressed [Terry (CE)].

Others made comments that indicated they were becoming more aware of their privilege and status and what responsibility that gave them to act. Ben (a current enrollee) prompted by a reflection at the wall wrote, "As I stood there at the fence, I was very aware of my life, I was very aware of the lives of others on the other side of the fence, and of the great divide between us" [Ben (CE)].

Values related to migration and the other. Study participants were asked about the values they held related to migration and migrant populations. Current enrollees were asked this question before and after they went on a Learning Delegation. Facilitators/Administrators and Past Enrollees were also asked this question, and then asked to contemplate if any of their values

changed or shifted as a result of the Learning Delegation. Understanding more about participant values provides potential insight into the potential connection between their values and their interests in migration-related issues.

Most of the participants were able to articulate their values, which included values they categorized as Christian, and values associated with connectedness/relationships, justice & human rights, humility/openness/respect, joy, hope, and humanization/empathy. Each subtheme will be reviewed in the following sections.

Christian values. Ten enrollees and four facilitators/administrators mentioned Christian values that frame their views of migration. When asked to clarify what these were, they provided several examples. The most common related to hospitality, including welcoming the stranger or “alien.” For example, one past enrollee used the image of hands to illustrate this value of hospitality:

As I reflect on hospitality, and on our time on the border, the prevailing image in my mind is that of hands. Hands stretched open to include the other. We saw this over and over as we interacted with people....every time we went someplace new, we were greeted by everyone there with a warm handshake. Likewise, when we left, we would send each other off with another handshake, or occasionally a hug. Often before meals, we would hold hands and pray together. When we ate supper with a family in Mexico, their beautiful children reached out their hands to grab at mine. It was an invitation to interact, to play, and a reminder that kids everywhere are more or less the same [R].

Another specifically suggested hospitality as an antidote to violent or hostile attitudes:

It was suggested to us that the opposite of violence isn't nonviolence; the opposite of violence is hospitality. Hospitality is and always has been God's antidote to the violence

of walls, of exclusion, and of fear. And the gospel's challenge to us is to extend that hospitality generously; not only to our friends who will repay in kind, but as widely as we can imagine (Luke 14: 12-14) [R].

In addition to the reference to Luke, participants mentioned Romans 12:13, Matthew 5, Matthew 25, Genesis 1, and Hebrews 13. Most of these biblical references relate to caring for people who are marginalized or welcoming the "stranger."

Other Christian values they mentioned were serving the poor, putting others before self, biblical justice, loving neighbors, and justice for the marginalized. One participant reflected, "We are to love our neighbor as God has loved us all. We are to build a community where God's justice is done on earth as it is in heaven" [R].

Connectedness/relationships. Two facilitators/administrators and four enrollees mentioned the important value of friendship or connectedness. One explained, "...there's a deeper sense in which we are all connected, so that sort of shapes my understanding" [Ben CE]. Others mentioned friendships they had in their home communities who had experienced crossing the border, and how being there helped them feel connected to these friends. Another mentioned the importance building connections and strengthening relationships on or near the border through local partners. And yet another mentioned the concept of "horizontal solidarity" [Adam (PE)] where they felt more connected to others in the community. Facilitators/administrators mentioned that the project partner's focus on forming and strengthening relationships across borders is a direct form of peacebuilding, and one they felt proud to be a part of [Beth (F/A), FN]. Another noticed the degree to which migrants were connected to their families in their willingness to risk everything for the possibility of a safe passage [Barbara (F/A)]. All of these

examples demonstrate the importance of human relationships and dignity. They saw the value and potency of connections.

Justice & human rights. Four enrollees mentioned values that explicitly related to justice and human rights. One said, “Why should I, just because I was born white in this country, why should I have more than everyone else?” [Stephanie (CE)]. Another said, “...having a friend that is dealing with being oppressed by our own community and how that makes them feel and how hard it is for them. I think that’s what impacts me more than anything” [Terry (CE)]. Another enrollee just described themselves as “pro-rights.” This value was not measured quantitatively, but was clearly evident in the study participants both prior to, during, and after the Learning Delegation.

Humility, openness, and respect. Several enrollees noted the humility, openness, and respect that they witness in the leaders of the Learning Delegation. One noted, “They are not trying to change people’s minds necessarily by telling people they are wrong” [Wendy (CE)] or “They seems pretty open..hearing other voices...seemed pretty fearless, talking to border patrol people and seemed very genuine with them” [Ben (CE)]. This was a character trait that was valued in the facilitators and local partner leaders, and also one that was identified as an important part of preparedness for a learning delegation.

Joy. One enrollee and one facilitator/administrator mentioned joy as a value they noticed on the learning delegation:

The symbol of the wall, with the beautiful colors on the one side. And I just thought I see so much in my own community—the joy of the people who don’t have much. And the people who have everything are cold....I think it is symbolic of that wall, here is the great American side with all the ugliness [Terry (CE)].

John (our facilitator) agreed when he stated, “There is joy and not only is there a lot of poverty, but they are caught in a struggle between the U.S. and the cartel, and they are at the mercy of the cartel. I mean there is all kinds of nuances to their lives, but yet they put butterflies on the wall” [John (F/A)]. In this statement, John was identifying the complexity of living with immense stress and burden while also maintaining a focus on joy, beauty, and possibility.

Hope. Six participants mentioned the value of hope. They say hope in the local partners, and two noted a “paradox” where the closer one got to the border, the more hope that was felt: “I mean, there’s a paradox about moving towards where this conflict is being realized...and yet, there is a palpable spirit of hope in the midst of this community that’s resisting this violence” [Andy (PE)]. Ben (current enrollee) also used the word “paradox” to describe his experience at the border:

...here is the paradox of our trip to the borderlands. If you want to find hope, go to the wall. In the shadow of the wall are some of the most amazing communities of resistance, of empowerment, and of solidarity. They are made up of people of faith from different countries, with different languages, bringing different religious customs—but who join together for prayer, for bible study, for delivering drinking water to remote parts of the desert, for marketing fairly-traded organic coffee, and for a weekly vigil to honor those who’ve died in the desert...[Ben (CE)].

John, a facilitator who lived on the border stated, “I actually have more hope living here than anywhere I’ve been” [John (F/A)]. John was inspired by the friendships and connections he has made living on the border. He feels a sense of hope that comes from these relationships. It is important to note that this comment was made prior to many of the proposed restrictions on migration made by the Trump administration.

Humanization & empathy. There were also indications of the value of humanization and empathy, especially through relationships and storytelling. Stephanie (a current enrollee) explained how storytelling helped provide more context around a person's reason to migrate:

When you learn to know someone and you know their story of what their life is about, it makes you totally understand why they do not want to be there and they wanna have what's best for their kids, or they want their kids to be safe [Stephanie (CE)].

At least three participants mentioned gaining a sense of empathy through a friendship or shared experience with someone. And Wendy also mentioned how the Learning Delegation led her to be more empathic:

I think even just going to Mexico and doing this delegation, I think it just refreshes that idea and it's easier to emphasize and less easy for me to put that in the past and forget. It is hard. It's so hard for so many people, I think if anything, just being empathic or understanding just a tiny bit more where someone is coming from [Wendy (CE)].

The final section of this Chapter will describe indications from the data that the participants on the learning delegation experienced a shift or change in their perceptions about or actions related to migration.

Indications of a shift in a prior understanding as a result of the Learning Delegation

Enrollees were asked to reflect on the ways in which the Learning Delegation may or may not have shifted their perceptions about migration in the United States. One facilitator noted that they had minimal control over whether or not these shifts will occur, but they can set up the possibilities for change to occur:

We love it when people can come. Because we believe at some level, if people can come and see what is here, it will impact them. What they do with it, whether they will take

that and work harder, or whether they take that and for reasons that are hidden in their own personalities they can't do much with it, we don't have any control over that. But if people can come here and be touched by the people they meet...we feel like we've done something that needs to be done. We can't do anything about what happens when people leave, that's up to them. [R].

When there was a change, facilitators and administrators reflected on the indicators of those changes. For some, they noticed a change in the ways in which the learning delegation enrollees got involved in advocacy work (which is an explicit goal of the Learning Delegation):

We encourage people to go back to the communities and learn more about what they, what their communities re doing for immigrants...the ones who have been participating now are the ones who are teaching English as a second language in the schools, and also in volunteers to organizations where they serve immigrants, healthcare, cleaning, whatever. They become involved with that [Jose (F/A)].

They also noticed when enrollees took a stronger stance “..[he] has become much more risky, in his role, his voice, his power, on issues of immigration than ever before” [Luisa (PE)]. At times they notice emotional or physical reactions from the participants, such as nodding, nerves, shaking heads, or tears. And they sometimes don't know which activities or interactions will prompt reactions from enrollees: “Quite often we'll see people that, something in particular will touch them. And you never know which thing that's gonna be” [Barbara (F/A)]. Sometimes they can tell there has been a change because they hear a shift in the participants' tone of voice, especially if they were skeptical about migration issues: “By the end of the week, he was talking, just as we'd visit or whatever, in softer kinds of ways” [Barbara (F/A)].

They also notice shifts in behavior on social media:

When I saw a couple months later, one of the girls on Facebook had posted a thing about different [sic] of buying fair trade clothing, perhaps she was always interested in it, but I think at least it got her, pushed her more towards thinking that way perhaps” [Beth (F/A)].

One facilitator shared a story about a past participant who asked to purchase small pieces of locally-made handicrafts from one of the local partners and then whenever they go to visit with their legislator about policy issues, they bring one of those items as a gift to represent the region for whom they are advocating [Barbara (F/A)]. Yet another mentioned how they could tell there was a shift or change in the enrollee because after the Learning Delegation that person kept sending the facilitator articles that he found about migration. The facilitator felt this was an indicator of on-going interest and learning [John (F/A)].

Some Learning Delegation Participants said that they did not feel like they were changed, but that there was some indicator of a shift, or that their thoughts or feelings about immigration were reinforced. One said, “I think the issue of, is it effective for change and that kinda stuff, it might be for some people, it didn’t change the way I look at things” [Terry (CE)]. James (a past enrollee) described this eloquently:

If your questions is whether this Learning Delegation changes people or not, I would have to say for me it’s yes and no. It didn’t really change my perceptions on immigration much, because I went being pretty leftist radical in that sense and I came back leftist radical on it. On the other hand, I know more and probably feel more personally motivated in terms of making a difference in this country. So in that sense, yes [James (PE)].

However, James also indicated that his experience prompted significant conversations with people who did not agree with them on migration issues.

Some participants mentioned that their experience on the Learning Delegation confirmed their beliefs, supported their attitudes, or reinforced/strengthened their perception of migration: “I became even more convinced, and I had done the work on this before, I became even more convinced that the wall is not helpful [R]. Another said, “I’m not sure I would say changed it, I think underscored it” [Ben (CE)].

Andy (a past enrollee) discussed the process of transformation (or in their words, conversion) as one that occurs over layered experiences and relationships. And, that the Learning Delegation was one of those:

I mean I didn’t have kind of a radical new way of seeing when I got home, but it was also true that this conversion process I was describing is not a one time thing, that one does and then you’re done with it, that each time that you go back the pictures in your mind, the experiences, they layer on top of each other after a while. In a beneficial and helpful way...it added to past experiences and things I knew...it heightened the sense of urgency in an appropriate way for me. It provided new energy to come back home and work on these things that otherwise there’s no shortage of important things to work on [Andy (PE)].

Another wrote in a reflection about feeling unsettled: “So we came back unsettled. Wondering. Knowing something more about the experience of brothers and sisters who are not that much different from our own ancestral undocumented immigrants” [R]. The unsettledness that was felt by the participants also helped them to keep their ideas and intentions fresh:

I think even just going to Mexico and doing this delegation, I think it just refreshes that idea and it's easier to emphasize and less easy for me to put that in the past and forget. It's hard. It's so hard for so many people. I think, if anything, just being empathic or understanding just a tiny bit more where someone is coming from [Wendy (CE)].

And, for some, it gave them new stories to share with others or use in advocacy efforts: "For me, it gives me another story to tell...four or five" [Terry (CE)]. Alex (a facilitator/administrator) enforced this when they said:

...I think there are a lot of myths and misinformation. I think a lot of those stories tell the real story of what is happening in Latin America, what people are fleeing from....also just going to the border for me has given me a new insight from border patrol, an insight about the wall, about the communities on both sides of the wall...it's telling U.S. citizens about that. Whenever they engage in conversations about borders or immigration that they will have that in their minds too so they can make more informed conversations. They can have more informed conversations as well [Alex (F/A)].

For those who describe some kind of transformation, these incidences fell into three primary categories: shifts in new knowledge (head), humanization and/or changed relationships (heart), or a heightened sense or urgency for working for a change.

Shifts in thoughts and/or knowledge. Themes related to influencing knowledge or the head included those who mentioned new learning and also reflections from the facilitators about what they observed in their participants.

Eight enrollees specifically mentioned new knowledge or understandings they gained from the Learning Delegation. In particular, they mentioned the interactions with the border patrol, detention centers, the exercise in budgeting, more understanding and awareness of the

terrain, and new contextual or systemic knowledge about migration, drugs, and enforcement on and around the border. Adam (a past enrollee) articulated that he wanted a closer connection:

I wanted to have first-hand knowledge. I think that was it. So much of my thinking on the issues was more abstract and theoretical. Or, you, know, it's just so distant when you're reading news articles, so I wanted to have faces for names and some stories. And I did. I learned things that I didn't expect to learn...just getting a sense of what that actually looks like helps me...I feel more, when I'm talking about it to people, I feel more like I know what I am talking about [Adam (PE)].

New learning was also evident in several incidences where an enrollee said "I never thought about it that way before" [FN]. Wendy (a current enrollee) reflected on the Learning Delegation and said, "It hasn't changed my actions I don't think, but just my mindset" [Wendy (CE)].

James (a past enrollee) said, "It confirms...and it also gave me more specific knowledge about things that I was only generally aware of" [James (PE)]. So, there was an indication that knowledge (whether new or not) was gained through a new perspective and broader or more complex mindset.

Wendy (a current enrollee) talked about a new imagination or empathy from being in the space:

I think just having the experience of knowing what {Border City} even looks like helps me in my work...I can personally hear their story and just imagine where they were living and imagine what it would look like for the cartel to swarm their house there...I feel more of a connection with them in the sense of I know where they're coming from [Wendy (CE)].

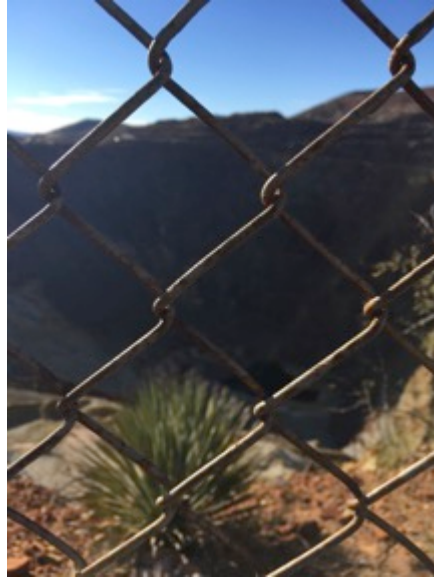


Figure 28: Photograph of the view of the desert through a fence. Photographed by Jennifer Chappell Deckert.

Used with permission.

Michael (a past enrollee) made a statement that indicated his new understandings about whether or not a person “chooses” to migrate or not:

...I think coming here, doing what we were doing...that’s kind of shifting my perspective a little bit...learning about NAFTA and a little bit of that played into that story a little bit of what the realities are, how US policies affect people in the Northern Triangle and Mexico and why they’re leaving...I guess I never really had had the exposure to pay that much attention to that side of the story when I was living in the U.S. So being here has helped me see that side and understand that there needs to be advocacy. Not just for protecting rights once they’re there, but giving them the option to choose to migrate, since it’s not really a choice [Michael (PE)].

Facilitators and Administrators reflected on the indications of change about perceptions and interactions with migration that they saw in the enrollees:

...this experience becomes putting some of these ideas and stereotypes that they've accumulated over time to the test, and now have been challenged and now dismissed, completely dismissed, and maybe one of these stereotypes is just 'Why don't people just get in line?' You know? Why don't people go beyond, and suddenly those stereotypes that they've never really touched it, generationally they had been, but because it's not their own experience, they've not touched it, and suddenly those stereotypes are dismissed by understanding the reality...so the idea of a learning delegation...is one of mutual transformation, and as westerners, we don't need to do any more missionary work. We need to be going, and we need to be transformed. The problem of economic global inequity lies within our own spaces. People are suffering from years and years of colonialism, and we have to be the ones to take responsibility for our part in that [Luisa (PE)].

They also wanted to treat the knowledge producing part of the Learning Delegation with care: "I struggle with how to keep the delegations from becoming poverty tourism...because I do not want that..." [John (F/A)]. This means that both facilitators/administrators and enrollees shared this concern.

Shifts in emotions or feelings. Several participants described the way their knowledge shifted or changed. One participant mentioned that even if they knew a lot going in and did not experience any shifts in knowledge, they were still impacted by the experience. Adam said, "I think it was more the feelings that changed than the thinking for me...it was helpful for me to hear and feel the frustration and fear from people..." [Adam (PE)]. When asked if they had different perceptions about migration after the Learning Delegation, one stated, "Well, not

different, but I think it went from head to heart...” [Suzanne (PE)]. Andy (a past enrollee) described the different between changes in the head and heart:

...how do we change our minds? How are we impacted in a way that takes route in us? I think it’s what, theologically is maybe how does our concern about people who live in places where violence and exploitation is happening, how do those become real situations and real people to us that we can see that of God in them, without being physically in those places and smelling those smells and shaking the hands, and laughing and crying at the stories. Those are things that the conversion is something that happens through the heart. These other things that I can learn about immigration policy back home are things that happened in the head. And I think there’s something much more powerful happens when you impact both the head and the heart...so when the heart is impacted it can reorient one, and that’s what I guess I mean by conversion [Andy (PE)].

Those that indicated more of a heart shift mentioned the process of humanization, being inspired by being in the same space of migration, and an awareness of their own privilege.

Humanization of the border was an explicit objective stated by the Learning Delegation facilitators. Humanization was also mentioned by many enrollees. For some, the process of humanization occurred through a face-to-face interaction or beginning of a relationship (on the Learning Delegation or at home). For example, when they witnessed a person with anti-immigrant views shift their perspective on or after the Learning Delegation:

...he was transformed when he went to the learning delegation, when he went to see the families, and he had that connection, face-to-face, to another human being who has been in a different position economically and in life. I think that touched him and just transformed him. This is a very conservative guy... [Jose (F/A)].

Terry (a current enrollee) also indicated that humanization happened through relationships and shared interests:

...know somebody's that's being oppressed, how it affects their family and all...there's a change, or at least an educational piece there that doesn't happen unless there's a face-to-face part of it. In bringing people together it can be, I think it's been helpful...Then it isn't just a student, it's my neighbor, and we both bring things to the table, whether we're English speakers or Spanish speakers [Terry (CE)].

Suzanne agreed when she stated:

It's the stories. It's the personal relationships...it's when somebody is going to the church that you go to, and you respect them, and after having been their friend, or at least knowing them, and appreciating them for five years you find out that they're not documented, and you say, 'What the hell?' You know? I have all these preconceptions about undocumented people and you just blew them all to smithereens [Suzanne (PE)].

A local woman invited the Learning Delegation group into her home and she said, "Thank you for coming to see us so you can see that we are not the monsters they say we are" [FN].

Sometimes it took a physical or geographical connection in order for a new or different perspective to arise: "Since we know some people that crossed there, that was just...oh, it just got ya in your heart" [Stephanie (CE)]. Michael (a past enrollee) suggested that his first-hand experience emphasized a better understanding:

I understand what the border is better now. I understand the impact of what it means to go back. I have perspective of those who cross the border...and I understand what that's like because of having met and encountered some of those people.." [Michael (PE)].

Wendy, a current enrollee who works in the area of migration said:

I think the trip kind of...helped me...humanize those that are coming to where I work...just thinking back on when we were in [Border City] and then we came back and we went to Operation Streamline⁸ and then we realized that those people were crossing that were in front of us in court had been some of the people that were crossing on the border right when we were there [Wendy (CE)].

So, for Wendy, listening to deportation proceedings that occurred on the same night, and likely in the same place where we were sleeping on the border made the experience come live for her differently than just hearing about it in a different place.

For others, they recognized something of themselves in the other: "...my student just wept, because he could see himself in that very space, and he himself had lived into that, and he had succeeded through the system, but understanding that very, very few people do" [Luisa (PE)]. So, sharing a common life experience (whether it is migration lived experience or just sitting in the same courtroom) allowed the content of the Learning Delegation to come alive in a different way.

Themes in the data also indicated an increased awareness of privilege that resulted in a feeling of mutuality or empathy on the part of North Americans on the Learning Delegation. They said, "I think just the surroundings...where we were, and where they lived and how my life is so different and I am so privileged" [Stephanie (CE)]. Luisa mentioned this in her interview:

...I think part of it is easily you could switch roles. They could have been born in the US, the other person could have been born in El Salvador, or whatever, you know, we didn't

⁸ Operation Streamline is the name of a Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice initiative which allows up to 70 migrants at a time to be tried in immigration court for illegal entrance. One of the activities of the Learning Delegation was to sit in the courtroom and listen to these proceedings.

choose that part of our journey, right? We didn't choose to be born in those spaces, than how do we now become responsible for what we do have?" [Luisa (PE)].

Indications of a shift in actions or advocacy efforts that resulted from the Learning

Delegation

One important question in this dissertation was if enrollees actually made any changes related to advocacy and action in the area of migration. Some enrollees mentioned a transformative experience related to becoming more active, both religiously and also in terms of their motivation for change related to immigration policy and practices. Terry (a current enrollee) reflected on how the trip "...helped me give I guess a little bit more...strength. Give me a little bit more, not authority, but willingness to speak out and talk a little bit more educated on what are the issues" [Terry (CE)]. Michael (a past enrollee) said, "My understanding of the desert, and crossing this border is deeper, and broader, and richer now because of this trip. That still has incredible powered value. Then, the question is how do I make sure that that's not only bounding around my head but also others?" [Michael (PE)]. And Andy (a past enrollee) agreed with these assertions:

Even though I knew a lot of the facts already, stories and narratives are also what kind of drives one's advocacy, or one's priorities, so I came home with new narratives, new stories, new people. In some ways it built on what I knew in a way that kind of infused on new urgency, new energy. And some new ways of seeing" [Andy (PE)].

Both administrators/facilitators and enrollees mentioned the importance of advocacy being tied to the Learning Delegation. Six of the administrators/facilitators described an explicit goal of advocacy and also the ways in which they have seen that work for past enrollees. One facilitator stated a goal of a minimum of two times where they might share the stories about what

they learned on the border. Another felt that the stories were what made the advocacy come alive. This was illustrated by an example where a past enrollee takes a piece of local handicraft from the women on the border whenever they go speak with legislators about migration. One thought that high school and college students were more likely to return and get involved in local advocacy efforts [Alex (F/A)]. Or, that they thought the advocacy efforts were especially impactful in predominantly white churches or when done by white past enrollees. However, they admitted that there is not a clear way to tell how impactful this advocacy was. In fact, they thought that perhaps there could be some more organization, follow-up, or even measurement on the part of the Project Partner in keep advocacy efforts alive [FN]. This could happen in a more intentional way by coordinating preparation and follow-up materials to help people work with the information before and after the delegation. Beth (a facilitator/administrator) said, "...our hope is that with this information people have gained, is to go back home and connect, whether it be advocacy work or change their lifestyle, which then has a trickle effect of changing the rights through the system..." [Beth (F/A)].

Five enrollees felt like their experience on the Learning Delegation really shaped their advocacy and/or helped them be more effective in advocacy. Specifically, they felt their stories gave more insight/served as tools, that their willingness to take the time to go brought a degree of credibility to their efforts, and that the Learning Delegation serves to "plant a seed" [Lisa (PE)] for later advocacy. One, when referencing how it might impact people who were already supportive of migration ("the choir") said, "I think it helps the choir by being able to engage others. But, with a more informed ability to converse" [James (PE)].

Lisa (a past enrollee) said that this experience should focus on targeted groups in order to facilitate more direct action:

The people that actually have power and voice and work in this issue can use their experiences in a more efficient and proactive and realistic way rather than a random church congregation who just wants to learn coming, learning going back. And sure, their dialogue or their way of talking about migration might be different, but just being perfectly realistic and kind of pessimistic, what's that going to do? That's just a lot of money to go back and be able to talk about something in a more educated way [Lisa (PE)].

One respondent stated that they did not think the experience would change their advocacy efforts or involvement in migration-related initiatives. However, this same respondent provided an example of how their congregation had taken efforts to offer tangible support to migrant populations [Ben (CE)]. So, it actually had made a difference. It is difficult to understand what kind of advocacy would have happened without the experience of the Learning Delegation. A couple others mentioned their discomfort with overt advocacy efforts because of a discomfort with public speaking or a potential role conflict with their profession.

Six enrollees explicitly said that the Learning Delegation motivated them to work for change in some way:

We have learned, and seen, and sat with, and walked alongside, and then suddenly you're back in your regular life going, 'what am I doing that's making a difference here?' It's that summer camp experience where you come home on a high, and then you go, 'oh, crap, I got to go weed the garden now,' I think both of us felt that, and I think others in the group felt that....it opened me more to consider how I can be an advocate and whether it was surreptitiously, or as in giving money, or standing with, or even in writing about...it was reminding people that when you drink that cup of coffee, somebody picked

it somewhere...my understanding of the desert, and crossing this border is deeper, and broader, and richer now because of this trip...Then, the questions is how do I make sure that that's not only bouncing around my head, but also others [Beth (F/A)].

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the experiences of participants on a Learning Delegation, and the ways in which their experiences may or may not have contributed to any changes in their perspectives about migration and/or their action or advocacy efforts around migration. Details from this final Chapter of findings indicated that there were shifts in perspectives about migration prompted by the experiences on a Learning Delegation. Initially, I was expecting that these potential shifts would connect to new knowledge about migration. However, these participants clearly articulated that the shifts they experienced were more closely tied to a different kind of learning or perspective. For example, a shift from head-knowledge to heart-knowledge, or a stronger connection to affective learning that occurred. Another way they described these shifts was in relationship to new skills or tools that would allow them to be more articulate or effective in their advocacy efforts. This is not what was expected, but is also an important element of learning that should not be dismissed. The final Chapter of this dissertation will discuss these results in more detail and relate them to prior theories and scholarship and future directions for social work.

Chapter Eight: Implications & Discussion

Overview

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, social workers address many different areas of migration. For more than a century, they have had an established role in settlement. They have also been involved in improving access to safe housing, employment, food, and healthcare for migrant populations. And, as globalization has increased the complexity of these services in recent decades (Dominelli, 2010), they have increased their roles in policy advocacy and legislative action. Yet one area of migration that still needs to be advanced by social workers is the area of social inclusion, which is largely understudied in social work. Figure 1 in Chapter 2 illustrates the role of social work in the social inclusion of migrant populations, which includes tangible support, community services, legal/technical support, advocacy, and addressing negative perceptions. As this dissertation has illustrated, social inclusion can be fostered through education, relationships building, storytelling and shared experience.

Since the beginning of this dissertation process in 2016, efforts to discriminate against migrants (both personally and legislatively) have increased significantly. This is shown through increased numbers of anti-immigrant militia groups, hate crimes; proposed legislation such as revisions to the Flores Settlement Agreement (which provides basic protections of children held in migration detention centers) (Human Rights First, 2016); the proposed change of public charge of inadmissibility (which makes it more difficult for a migrant to gain legal status if they have or may access public assistance of any form) (Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds, 2018); and the threat of executive action to repeal the constitutional right of birthright citizenship (Kight, 2018). Continued negative or restrictive policies about migration contribute to more negative perceptions about migrant populations through their discussion in news media, social

media, and political discourse (Golash-Boza, 2015; Marreno, 2012; Martinez & Slack, 2013). As stated in Chapter 1, George & Wilcox's (1996) study of political extremism suggested that the root of this extremism is distorted perceptions. This dissertation supports Hochschild's (2016) idea that the antidote to distorted perceptions is direct experience, story-telling, and relationships.

This final dissertation Chapter will outline the study implications and discuss its relevance to theory, prior scholarship, and social work values, practice, and research. Each of the research questions will be discussed as they connect to the analysis. Chapter 8 will also provide recommendations for Learning Delegations as they relate to social inclusion and migration. Finally, the study limitations will be addressed.

Connections to Theory

Social Identity Theory. Social Identity Theory applies to this dissertation in the ways in which it examines social perceptions of others, specifically migrants. Social Identity Theory argues that social perceptions are shaped by a person's sense of belonging to a specific social group that gives them emotional value. This connection then becomes part of how we define ourselves (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). So, the more we feel emotionally connected to a group, the more that group becomes part of who we perceive ourselves to be. Therefore, as we find ways to create associations and emotional connections between groups, we expand understanding that reduces a sense of threat or rigid associations. Regarding perceptions of migrants, this means that when you can form a meaningful relationships or connection with a migrant, you become more accepting of that group of people. This also occurs through empathy (Stephen, Renfro, Esses, Stephen, & Maltrin, 2005), a cosmopolitan worldview or global mindset (Ceballos & Yakusko, 2014), and past experience living abroad or expanding your understandings in another way about migrants (Haubert & Fussell, 2006).

The majority of participants in this study already held a positive view of migrants, but also had previous experience that potentially helped contribute to that view, such as education, study abroad, a friendship or family member with migration experience, or an established stance that rejected ethnocentrism. However, there were examples provided by study participants of other people who had never connected with or interacted with anyone with migration experience, or did not have prior experience. For these people, there was a profound shift in their perceptions, and as a result of their experiences, their attitudes and actions surrounding migration changed. For those who were already involved, they gained confidence in their abilities and tools/stories to use in order to advocate effectively, which is important to consider.

Transformative Learning Theory. Mezirow (1997) posits that for someone to shift their frame of reference, or prior understanding, they need to be self-reflective and give critical thought to their past assumptions. This shift can happen through problem-solving and also interactive dialogue (such as intergroup dialogue). The social activist and educator Paulo Freire (1970) considered this part of conscientization. Conscientization is a deliberate balance between reflexivity, unsettledness, and perplexity that prompts growth and change (Chappell Deckert & Koenig, 2017; Rossiter, 2011). Critical social work argues for this as a space to suspend judgment and be in a space where you are willing to learn and develop new understandings (Dominelli, 2010).

Key ingredients to these shifts in understandings include reflexivity (Freire, 1970; Schon, 1983) and experiential learning (Dewey, 1938). Both of these ingredients were included on the Learning Delegation experience, though perhaps in different amounts. The entire endeavor was based on encounters with local experts and those most impacted on or near the border between the United States and Mexico. The facilitators intentionally planned reflection and processing

time for enrollees, as individuals and also as a group, and there were efforts made to provide storytelling from multiple perspectives, and emphasize voices who were otherwise left out of conversations about migration. There was also an emphasis on attention to process, connection, and power, which helped to frame the stories that were being shared. Several participants mentioned the importance of the experiential element of the Learning Delegation, and that being in that space made the issues come alive for them in a way that did not seem possible from farther away.

Therefore, if the element of social inclusion of migrant populations that social workers need to work on is addressing negative attitudes, then both Social Identity Theory and Transformative Learning Theory offer suggestions as to why a Learning Delegation works for this initiative. The Learning Delegation provides an opportunity to counter fear-based assumptions about migrants. These assumptions are otherwise rooted in social media and political discourse used to promote restrictive policies about migration. The role of empathy and humanization (stated explicitly as a goal by the Project Partner) make this work on a Learning Delegation. Transformative Learning Theory and Critical Theory bring in the importance of self-reflection, and group processing as a way to understand complex dynamics in navigating self and other. Therefore, the opportunities provided on the Learning Delegation for storytelling, listening, and processing experiences assisted in shifting attitudes and awareness about migration.

So, the findings in this dissertation largely confirm the theoretical grounding in which it is based. However, there is room to understand more. For example, what are the particular elements that prompt these shifts? What role does positionality play on the part of the enrollees or facilitators? What is the balance between learning and fostering understanding and voyeurism

or exploitation? Both transformative learning theory and social identity theory do place the burden of change on the individuals that have negative attitudes toward migration, but who is responsible for providing the key ingredients for this change to happen, and is that exploitive? These are areas that could be explored more.

Connections to Prior Research

Chapter 2 reviewed research related to strategies that have been studied to help shape perceptions about others, and specifically about migrant populations. The study abroad literature contributed to this study as it confirmed that studying abroad does increase or expand a global mindset (Clapp-Smith & Jaridan, 2010; Jones, 2012; Rowan-Kenyon & Nehaus, 2011; Graham & Crawford, 2012). However, the range of goals and structure of study-abroad endeavors is broad, and there are specific strategies in the Learning Delegation, such as storytelling and advocacy efforts, that are not generally addressed in these prior studies.

Other strategies that have been studied, such as intergroup dialogue and community interventions, were perhaps more closely tied to the Learning Delegation in terms of facilitated group processing and relationships building during the Learning Delegations (i.e. with Border Patrol or with migrant populations) and also with post-Learning Delegation community advocacy or educational activities that were organized by past participants.

The particular study participants for this dissertation did not represent groups who are anti-immigrant. However, there were some stories shared by facilitators that indicated a shift in perceptions from different learning delegation participants (who did not fit into the study inclusion criteria), and there were stories shared by participants about conversations or encounters they had with people as they shared about their experiences. Additionally, there was definitely a desire on the part of the project partner, the facilitators, as well as the participants to

try and facilitate this opportunity for people who are hesitant or reluctant to support migration reform or have limited exposure or relationships with migrant populations.

It is notable that in the field of social work there is an increased interest in international social work and globalization. However, much of this interest is framed in a white, western perspective, which can perpetuate colonization-related perspectives. Therefore, one challenge for the project partner as well as for the profession of social work is how to address the colonial nature of these endeavors and seek more mutuality and cultural humility in the process.

Insights from the Participants about the Learning Delegation

The first guiding research question for this qualitative case study asked, *What are the experiences of the Learning Delegation participants (both enrollees and facilitators/administrators)?* Chapter 4 and 5 addresses these experiences in great detail.

The project partner has four stated objectives for the Learning Delegation, including solidarity, relationships, education, and transformation (Project Partner Implementation Manual, 2002). These objectives align well with the reviewed literature indicating that relational connections, experiential education, and mutuality can lead to shifts in attitudes about migration (Ceballos & Yakushko, 2014; Haubert & Fussell, 2006; Mezirow, 1997; Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan & Martin, 2005).

One thing that particularly stood out in this research is the strong efforts on the part of the project partner to coordinate all activities and elements of the Learning Delegation through local partners. Solidarity with local partners and with those who have lived experience with migration is a priority, so much so that some facilitators have moved to the border in order to form stronger connections with these local partners. They also make sure that local partners have a voice in both the content and process of the learning delegation. The entire endeavor was developed by a

person with lived experience of migration, in partnership with a retired pastor who wanted to improve understandings about migration-related issues.

Unlike many religiously based programs, there is no mention of mission work related to evangelism in this program. There are no requirements of participants or partners related to church membership or affiliation. There were no attempts in this research to reform, change, or convert someone's belief system. This is important to note because in other programs, religious colonialism is part of the process. For this project partner, religious and spiritual influence only comes into play as it relates to the biblical call to serve and respond to injustice. Additional comments about religion and spirituality will be addressed in the following section related to ideology.

The demographics of the interview participants for this dissertation included a wide range of age (25-72). One facilitator noted that the people who tend to enroll in Learning Delegations are either young (college-aged) or older (retired) because they tend to have more flexibility around schedules. There were also comments from local partners that they were interested in younger people attending because the potential for their advocacy involvement after the Learning Delegation might be higher. Most of the interviewees were from the Northern region of the United States and Canada. Most of them came from helping professions, had a good amount of travel experience, prior relationships with migrants, and were already involved in advocacy efforts. So it would appear that these are not the kinds of people who "need" to go. There were numerous discussions about who "needed" to go and how it might work to recruit people who were less knowledgeable or experienced in migration-related issues. Many interviewees mentioned the influence of their family, education, or professional lens on their perspective about migration. This was an important element for the enrollees, but also important for

facilitators. It was noted several times that having a facilitator with lived experience of migration was especially poignant. Experience with international travel, life, and other cosmopolitan-related experiences gave them a more open stance on the Learning Delegation. This does not mean that they were immune to transformation, however. The transformations they experienced will be discussed in a separate section of this Chapter.

Research participants described their experiences on the Learning Delegation before, during, and after they returned. Prior to going, they reflected on their feelings (primarily curiosity and trust in the Project Partner) and goals for the Learning Delegation. The primary goals for enrollees were to be “in that space,” to learn about the complexities of migration across the U.S.-Mexico border, and to collect ideas about ways they could become more involved. The main goals for the facilitators were to humanize the border, and to help encourage people to become involved in advocacy efforts to support migrant populations. Enrollees were motivated by their prior experience or exposure to the topics of migration, and their awareness of the anti-immigrant sentiment that was becoming more prevalent in the media. From the analysis of this data, these goals were achieved.

During the Learning Delegation, participants reflected on particularly impactful activities. These included the encounters with the Border Patrol agents and also activities that occurred in emotionally charged spaces, such as the vigil, the wall itself, the immigration courtroom, the cemetery, desert, or detention center. Participants were struck by the power of storytelling and experiential learning (“just being in that space”). They described their feelings during the Learning Delegation as hope and empathy.

Both a curious and open stance and the ability to engage in experiential learning are cited in the study abroad literature as essential for effective pedagogy (Cseh, Davis, & Khilji, 2013;

Graham & Crawford, 2012; Jones, et. al, 2012). Hamad & Lee (2013) also noted the importance of interacting with local partners, which was definitely an intentional part of this Learning Delegation.

Overall, the participants in this study reported that the Learning Delegation was an impactful experience. The physical engagement and exposure to storytelling and direct experience they had on the Learning Delegation prompted them to dig deeper into their own understandings about migration. One particular component included the participants' ability to make a direct connection to the experience of migration, through a shared experience or understanding. Congruent with transformative learning theory, new frames of reference (from being at the wall, listening to the Border Patrol, walking in a graveyard, etc) caused a sense of unsettledness, emotion, or discomfort, which prompted them to want to continue to learn and/or take action. And despite the gravity of the stories they heard, there was an overall feeling of increased hope and empathy after the Learning Delegation.

Insights about the Strategies for Addressing Migration

One research question that emerged beyond the original research questions for this case study was, "*What are the strategies used to try and shift perspectives or actions related to migration?*" Chapter 6 addressed different strategies or interactions the study participants identified that may have contributed to a new understanding or approach to migration for them. These were organized into three broad areas. The first area addressed pedagogical strategies and collaboration. Relationship building was important. In this relationship building, language plays a role, both in terms of the ability to connect but also in terms of the power that words can hold.

Collaboration was also identified as an important part of their approaches to issues related to migration, including efforts in community organizing and facilitated dialogue, and

especially between or within groups who may not have the same ideological or political perspective about migration issues. Another issue related to collaboration was an expressed appreciation for the ways in which the Project Partner maintains a strong respect for and emphasis on local expertise.

Study participants also mentioned the pedagogical strategy of experiential learning, and its importance in drawing them into the learning in a way that could not happen without the contextual elements of the Learning Delegation. Many also named the storytelling and listening element as an essential part of the Learning Delegation. They especially appreciated the opportunities to participate in facilitated dialogue with people who they did not agree with (such as the Border Patrol). For them, these storytelling opportunities broadened their perspectives and instilled hope. They became the story-keepers who would bring an element of multiplication to spreading the story. The sharing of stories, interactions with other people, and shared experience facilitated the overall goal of humanization. And, it strengthened the connections they had at home with migrant populations, or peaked their interests in making connections.

Lastly, study participants talked about the influence of learning more and the impact of a broadened perspective on their ability to advocate. In addition to this, they were inspired to offer tangible support, both to migrants in their local communities and also to organize efforts to support migrants in other parts of the world as well. This strategy of involvement was encouraging.

Overall, the face-to-face experiential education style of the Learning Delegation fostered connections, empathy, and solidarity as a way to move the enrollees into action related to migration. As one participant described “moving from the head to the heart,” The participants felt first and then thought about the ways in which they could become agents of change.

Insights in the Participants' Perspectives about Migration

When study participants reflected on their perspective about migration (first part of Chapter 7), many of them expressed feelings of frustration, anger, or a sense of urgency for change. They participated on the Learning Delegation with a desire to get more accurate information, stories, and strategies for making change.

Despite most of them being from a similar religious background, they also recognized that there is not consensus across beliefs about migration. They recognized this with regard to differences of views within their own denomination and also differences when they heard local partners speak about doing their work in a Christian manner (specifically Border Patrol and Detention Center personnel). They understood that President Trump was elected primarily by evangelicals. So, it is not accurate to say that everyone who believes one way religiously can agree on migration policy. This created a paradox or sense of discomfort for some participants.

The Learning Delegation provided a interesting educational experiences by heightening macro or contextual issues for some. For example, study participants expressed that their experience on the delegation helped illustrate racism and stereotypes in a way that was very poignant. They became more aware of their own privilege and responsibility for making change. Others mentioned that they became more aware of the historic and economic forces that have created such a demand for migration. This is perhaps an important outcome of the Learning Delegation in that even though people who go tend to already have interest or involvement in migration issues, they may not always be aware of their own privilege and responsibility in making change.

Other Learning Delegation participants were particularly moved by the micro, or direct relationships that were formed through hearing individual stories and experiences of migrants.

These experiences helped them “move from the head to the heart” and gave them a sense of connectedness, empathy and mutuality. The connections they made, despite language barriers moved them to a stronger personal call to action in support of migrant populations.

There was definitely agreement that the experience of being in the space made a difference for them. Standing at the wall every morning, sitting in a courtroom, finding a baby bottle lid and list of phone numbers in the desert, and walking through a cemetery heightened their sense of empathy for migrants in a way they did not feel like they could get from watching a documentary or reading a book. It gave them a deeper understanding of the realities of migration.

Overall, Learning Delegation enrollees reflected on their own identity and history, including a sense of privilege or responsibility for what is happening at the U.S. Mexico border (i.e. paying taxes). They talked about a “re-orientation” of their perspectives and a new understanding that the opposite of violence is hospitality, and that there can be joy, beauty, and hope in the midst of pain and suffering. From micro changes in their perspective (i.e. helped me to be a better listener) to macro changes in their perspective (i.e. helped me understand racism or classism), they noted changes in their perspectives as a result of their experiences on the Learning Delegation.

Insights Related to Transformation/change

The final research question of this qualitative case study asked, “*What, if any, are the changes or shifts in perceptions or actions that result from experiences on the Learning Delegation?*” This question is addressed in the second part of Chapter 7. From the perspective of a social work scholar who is dedicated to the study of migration and social inclusion, this question is key. Does this kind of intervention seem to work with regard to changing peoples’

attitudes and responses to migration? According to the accounts of the study participants, the answer is yes.

Facilitators and administrators noted changes that they witnessed including increased volunteer and advocacy efforts, increased risk taking in speaking out and taking a stronger stance, shifts in tone and demeanor (even on the Learning Delegation), and shifts in practices of daily living (i.e. fair trade). And, while this study was not meant to measure the strength or extent of these changes, there was evidence of change.

Enrollee felt like their experience on the Learning Delegation gave them renewed energy and enthusiasm for advocacy efforts. It strengthened their conviction, reinforced their beliefs, and provided them better preparation for advocacy efforts by giving them tools of storytelling and new perspectives. Several of them mentioned that they felt unsettled or perplexed by the experience, which fueled their desire to do more.

The results of this dissertation underline the previous scholarship showing that relationships, stories, and experiences matter. They help the learners to go deeper into material and find connections beyond the head that draw them in and compel them toward action. Enrollees said that being there in that space helped them to “hear and feel the frustration and fear” that they otherwise could not perceive. These experiences also helped them to dismiss stereotypes through two primary methods: the incorporation of new knowledge and also the relationships and connections made at the border.

Overall, the Learning Delegation left participants feeling more convinced in their positive views of migration, more prepared and articulate about discussing their thoughts on migration, and more connected to the issues of migration. The Learning Delegation gave them another layer of experiences that helped them dismiss stereotypes and expand their perspectives to a

“deeper, broader, and richer” understanding. This finding is supported in the literature that supports experiential learning and reflection as a model for transformation. However, this literature (Graham & Crawford, 2012; Velure & Fisher, 2013) does less to address the motivation toward action or advocacy, which is an important part of this study.

Social Work Implications

Social work values. There are many ways in which this qualitative case study intersects with social work values. The core values of the *importance of human relationships* and the *dignity and worth of all people* are prominent in the data. The prominent objective of the Learning Delegation is to humanize the border. And, in a historic period where the border is militarized and increasingly dehumanized (i.e. border patrol calling migrants bodies), the movement towards humanization and compassion is absolutely imperative. Repeatedly, study participants illustrated the ways in which story sharing and shared experiences moved them towards dignity, and even hope.

A second and equally important social work value is the core value of *social justice*. Everyday there are reminders in political rhetoric and policy proposals that criminalize migration and enforce unjust systems of oppression for migrant populations. For too long, the response of social work has related primarily on settlement and individual or family assistance. Gradually we are shifting our focus to include more advocacy and political efforts. In the current political climate of anti-immigrant and nationalist sentiment, this is an absolute imperative for the field of social work.

Thirdly, the core values of *integrity* and *competence* are illustrated in this dissertation. If we are going to be advocates and allies for migrant populations, we absolutely need to have some direct connection that gives us a window into the real experiences of migrant populations

who cross the border. The best expertise is informed by the lived experience of those who know it best. So it is our role to help amplify those voices whenever possible. The new knowledge and understandings we gain also make us more competent as service providers who are in the direct line of contact with many migrant groups.

Research. Chapter 1 outlined several areas of need in social work and migration that have already been addressed by social work scholars, including, (a) improved preparation in global perspectives, trauma, and cultural competence; (b) increased understanding and emphasis on context; (c) additional focus on community and policy practice; and (d) development of new models and paradigms for social work approaches and policies that can be flexible and applicable in varied settings (Elliot, 2008). This study exploring Learning Delegations addresses all four of these areas of need. First, the exposure to the local nuances and culture and experiential nature of the Learning Delegation improved the participants' understanding of varied perspectives at the border. Listening to stories of the experiences of migrants helped them to understand trauma and gain cultural awareness. Second, being in the physical space where so many of these experiences happened improved their understanding of context. Third, they were encouraged to apply what they had learned and take some form of action upon their return to their local communities. Finally, combining experiential, affective, narrative, and political advocacy efforts into one initiative is a new model for social work that could be adapted to a variety of settings for learning and action to occur.

This study also reminds us that there are other questions that need to be explored in future research. For example, the question of purpose came up in my findings. Is it better to organize a Learning Delegation group that all have the same background/purpose and can create a united response to anti-immigrant sentiment (i.e. lawyers, advocates, or artists)? Or, is it better to take a

group that is purposely diverse in perspective, vocation, age, ethnicity, and degree of knowledge so that multiple layers of learning and growth can occur between group members. Another question to explore related to the structure of the Learning Delegation? What are the specifics of scheduling, pacing, and degrees of complexity that are key ingredients for transformative learning? What is the role of money and of religion in these Learning Delegations and how do they distract or enhance the objectives? What are the different nuances between programs and what is the experience like for someone who has no familiarity or association with the Project Partner? And finally, are there particular areas of social work that could benefit from this kind of experience, and why?

Education. There is no doubt that many short-term immersive international experiences are not being done with sensitivity to local cultures or prioritize local concerns (Rotabi, Gammonley, & Gamble, 2006). In general, the Project Partner for this dissertation does an excellent job of this. They have local partners who care for the planning and play an important voice in the process of the Learning Delegation. Voices of local partners are definitely prioritized. David Androff (2015) proposes a human rights model that should be applied to similar initiatives in social work education. This model includes attention to human dignity, nondiscrimination, participation of local experts, transparency, and accountability. Social work educators who initiate programs like the Learning Delegation will need to be sure to protect these priorities in their planning and implementation and resist any institutional pressures to generate money or exploit in any way.

Policy. Perhaps one of the unique aspects of this dissertation is that it connects experiential learning to policy analysis and advocacy. Comments from participants often illustrated the importance of being there in the midst of the border region, and the ways in which

that propelled their interests in working more and speaking more about migration. And, there was a unique balance in this learning process between technical knowledge (related to specific migration policies) and affective knowledge (related to the interactions and shared experiences with migrants themselves) that provides a richness and authenticity to policy practice.

Stakeholders who went noted that they would now have been able to understand the complexities and context of their decisions had they not been in the space and heard the stories directly from those most impacted. For a field that truly cares about context and complexities, this is a perfect fit.

There could be a more specific plan for policy advocacy after the Learning Delegation (see recommendations) that specifically links participants to calls for urgent action and consultation about effective advocacy strategies. Basic protections for migrant populations must be protected, and child welfare considerations (including family separation) need immediate action. The United States has an opportunity to make a substantial contribution to international human rights by contributing to a best interest of the child standard. Since the majority of people crossing the border are seeking asylum, it is important to enforce the right to credible fear interviews and the opportunity for asylum under international law. Investments of the part of the United States need to focus on community interventions and prevention (such as supporting new business initiatives/opportunities in local communities or drug prevention) instead of increased militarization of the border or the construction of a more solid wall.

Washington (2019) articulates the multiple meanings surrounding the current administration's push toward a wall. There are both symbolic and concrete meanings. While there is a desire for a concrete or steel wall to cover 1000 miles of the 1954-mile border along the southern part of the United States (Lu, 2019), the desire to "build a wall" includes much

more. Increased funding for border patrol, increased efforts toward militarization, more seizure of private lands and environmental degradation, increased “hunting” or stalking of undocumented people, and increased capacity for detention are all a part of the funding plan included with the wall. Multiple experts demonstrate the ineffectiveness of a physical wall in detaining migrants, halting drug trafficking, or stopping terrorism. And yet, the nationalistic and colonialist push for a wall continues to fuel hatred and xenophobia (Washington, 2019).

Practice. As discussed in Chapters 1 & 2, it is clear that social workers do play a key role in responding to migrant populations and migration policies and practices that impact all of the social institutions in which we work. This is the work of social inclusion. The potential influence of a Learning Delegation on this work (for social workers or for clients) is powerful and should be considered as a way to develop critical consciousness about migration issues and prompt advocacy efforts for changes in migration policy. For example, social workers could partner with organizations like the Project Partner to organize a Learning Delegation that specifically cater to the interests of the profession and better inform our efforts in advocacy and social change. This could be initiated by social work educators or practitioners who are directly involved in migration-related work.

A recent Gallop poll actually indicated that 75 percent of Americans think that immigration is a good thing for the United States. When asked about legal immigration, the number increases to 84 percent (America’s Voice, 2018). This study indicates that the voices of those who are anti-immigrant are much louder and influential politically, and they fuel current efforts toward restrictions (Mueller, 2018). Perhaps then the more important initiative for social work goes beyond changing attitudes and perceptions, and includes prompting otherwise complacent people to take political action and be effective advocates around migration reform.

The American Friends Service Committee, in their Quaker Social Change Ministry Model manual, outlines 10 tenets of accompanying (or companioning) for social change, which can be helpful guidelines for social workers involved in migration and social inclusion. These tenets summarize the importance of prioritizing the voices of those most impacted by migration, in an effort to avoid voyeurism or white supremacy norms for practice. Social workers can learn from these tenets in the area of migration and social inclusion, as well as in other arenas of practice. They are:

1. Building relationships of trust and accountability with people and communities most impacted by injustice by showing up and staying in the relationships for the long haul.
2. Remembering that the liberation of everyone and everything is inherently connected, and together we are on a learning journey toward it.
3. Walking together while navigating difference in a loving, respectful, trusting relationship.
4. Struggling together and encouraging one another's spiritual growth.
5. Contemplating the gifts you are going to receive when accompanying, instead of how you will give help, teach, tell, or fix.
6. Acknowledging and unlearning your patterns of dominance, like taking charge, leading, making decisions, etc.
7. Asking for and lending empathic support.
8. Moving beyond asking to acting.
9. Getting out of your comfort zone (materially, emotionally, and physically) and allowing yourself to be changed by this process.
10. Disrupting the systems and structures of oppression, with integrity and in authentic community with those most impacted, following their leadership. The Latin roots of

“accompanying” are to be together (com) in eating bread (panis), face to face (American Friends Service Committee, 2018, p. 41).

These tenets are all in some way connected to Learning Delegations and could also span towards other areas of social work in migration. They are important for social workers to be intentional about the design of their interventions so that they do not become exploitive. They also contribute to critical social work (Dominelli, 2010) and cultural humility (Canda & Furnman, 2010; Elliot, 2008).

Recommendations for Future Learning Delegations

The process of doing this dissertation also shed light on several recommendations for the Project Partner or for others who plan and implement similar initiatives. First and foremost, whenever possible, be sure to incorporate the direct voices of those most impacted by migration. Second, take care of your facilitators. It is a difficult and sometimes exhausting role to play, which requires self-care and institutional care. Third, the balance of scheduling can be tricky, especially with groups who have varying needs intellectually, spiritually, and physically. It is important to make sure that the pacing of the schedule allows for enough reflection time and group processing time so that the stories and experiences can steep and the process of meaning-making can take hold. Finally, the pre-delegation and post-delegation activities need to be increased. Both prior research and this current study indicate a need to preparatory conversations, activities, and knowledge in addition to a more tightly accountable process for post-delegation advocacy or other efforts to support migrant populations. There could be much more accountability and support in advocacy efforts after the Learning Delegation. There were comments by enrollees that the cost of participation in the Learning Delegation was too much

and also that it was very accessible. Others mentioned that their churches made a financial commitment to assist people with the costs, as a form of a “peace pledge” [Andy (PE)].

There was an indication that it is a large personal investment of both time and money that many people do not have. A couple facilitator/administrators questioned whether the money paid for participation on a Learning Delegation might be used more effectively in another way (specifically given to the local partners to do the work). At times the project partner has sponsored individuals or groups to go with an intentional purpose or focus (i.e. artists or advocates). Lisa (a past enrollee) supported this notion:

So I think this is actually better. The people that actually have power and voice and work in this issue can use their experiences in a more efficient and proactive and realistic way rather than a random church congregation who just wants to learn coming, going back. And sure, their dialogue or their way of talking about migration might be different, but just being perfectly realistic and pessimistic, what’s that gonna do? That’s just a lot of money to go back and be able to talk about something in a more educated way [Lisa (PE)].

There was also a clear sense that if they wanted to recruit people who did not agree with migration, this would need to be a funded experience because these were not people who were going to invest their own money to go. Additional ideas for scholarships included college students, more Latinos, or intentionally diverse groups [FN].

There were several suggestions from enrollees about how the Learning Delegations could go better (see Table 4). Three people said they would appreciate more preparation and recommended resources before they go. Other wanted more processing time. One wanted to hear more stories from an even broader audience, such as people with lived experience of

migration and perhaps even the drug cartel. Other suggestions included going with a friend or being paired up with someone for processing, getting advance notice about physical and emotional demands of the trip, having specific events or concrete plans for post-delegation advocacy, more political and contextual analysis, and a hope for expanded migration work (beyond the Learning Delegations).

Facilitators and administrators mentioned that the local partners wanted younger people to attend. They also wanted to make sure the enrollees did not treat their partner like they were in a zoo or ask sensitive questions:

People, typically, when they go around the world, it's to do two things that have nothing to do with learning delegations. Vacation, and they go with a different mindset, and there is no transformation, or number two, they go as missionaries, which can be very difficult in spaces where you think you're bringing God to the space, but you never allow that space to transform you. So the idea of a learning delegation, a learning service tour, is one of mutual transformation, and as westerners, we don't need to do anymore missionary work. We need to be going, and we need to be transformed. The problem of economic global inequality lies within our own spaces. People are suffering from years and years of colonialism, and we have to be the ones to take responsibility for our part in that [Luisa (PE)].

While many facilitators said they would like to have more people with conservative political views attend, they recognized the challenges:

The goal has been to have more people who are from more conservative perspectives politically and theologically...so we can engage them in conversation, but that has been just the nature of people not...putting people into a very odd position. People probably

thing it is dangerous to go there, so the majority who come are people who I would say are progressive supporters [of the Project Partner], or people who are already in some kind of social justice field in their community [Alex (F/A)].

Still, some facilitators would love to that to happen: "...we occasionally get some people who are anti-immigrant. And I actually like getting those people, because they often learn a whole lot. They don't necessarily make a dramatic shift in their attitudes, but occasionally they do, which is pretty neat to see" [John (F/A)]. Most people who come with negative or anti-immigrant sentiment are convinced to go by a friend or go with a group from a more rural, politically conservative area and a naïve about the nature of the Learning Delegation. In one instance, a supporter of the Project Partner who wants more information and they may ask, "Is [Project Partner] helping illegal people come into this country?" That individual was invited to attend a Learning Delegation:

He went with us. The short story is that he was transformed when he went...when he went to see the families and he had that connection, face-to face, to another human being who has been in a different position economically and in life. I think that touched him and transformed him. This is a very conservative guy who was from [Name of State]. So he was transformed. We not only gained him, but every time I go to speak in that area I call him to see if he is available to come with me and share his story about his experience [Jose (F/A)].

Luisa (a past enrollee) also felt like this was important for the local partners:

I think hosts want to feel that the people listening have the ability to change something. Or they're part of the fight with them So I guess If I'm thinking about the host, I'm afraid

that it probably feels like a waste of time to them to be using their energy and resources to educate a group of people that really can't change much [Luisa (PE)].

She also mentioned the impact of taking a leader in immigration reform:

..he said they'd been working on legislation for gosh these last ten years, they've been doing all this, but he himself had never been to the border...he had never given himself that space to listen, to be in a place of receiving people's stories...and here I am translating for him, and I know this about him, he's an immigration attorney, and you know, he's privileged to be in a space of discerning law and legislation and stuff, and he said to me, 'People that I sit with in this committee, they have no idea the impact of their decisions. They just have no idea...he had not had the opportunity for actual, contextual experience like this [Luisa (PE)].

Specific recommendations for changes will be included in an executive summary report, which will be provided to the Project Partner post-defense.

Reflexivity

As discussed in Chapter 3, being rooted in critical social work requires a consideration of standpoint. Being a participant researcher is not a simple task. I wanted to do it because I knew that I would get a more full and rich picture of the case, which included content, process, and also emotion related to the experience of the Learning Delegation. Because I felt strongly about the topic (and have for many years), I challenged myself to be a listener first, and a participant second. During the Learning Delegation there were many times that I wanted to jump into the conversation but I stopped myself from being the first to speak so I could absorb the thoughts and feelings of my colleagues first. Many of them encouraged me then to add my own voice to the table and expressed appreciation for my thoughts and feelings.

The participatory nature of my research also impacted the interviews. When listening to the transcripts, I noticed a very clear shift in the tone and connection I had with the respondents between the first and second interview. In the first interview with the current enrollees, I had never met them and was just trying to build rapport for the first time. The second interviews had a much more friendly tone, were longer, and included more emotional responses. I believe that was due to the fact that these respondents saw me then more as a peer, discussing our impressions and experiences together, and less as a removed or benign researcher. There was more laughter, tears, and affection in those second interviews as a result of the connections I made with other participants—through the closeness in van rides, the many shared meals, the evening processing times, and the shared learning experience. All of these participants I can now call friends, which does not typically happen in a scenario where the researcher is removed from the research. There was a higher degree of trust and connection during the interviews with the facilitators and past participants as well, which I think resulted from the fact that they knew I had been an enrollee myself, so I shared a similar experience with them.

The day before the Learning Delegation began, I spent at a Border Encuentro (Encounter), which was a meeting about border issues sponsored by many international non-profit organizations. Sitting in these workshops really helped prime and orient me to the key issues happening on the border before I met my group and started on our own journey. My participation in this meeting was an “extra” part of my research (I called it a prelude) but super important in terms of my frame of mind and preparation.

The day after the Learning Delegation ended, I spent with a large group of facilitators and administrators (North American and Latin American) from the project partner who were working on migration and border issues. I was able to spend the entire day listening to and observing

their assessments about the ways in which they do this work, and their strategies for the ways in which it could be improved. This “postlude” also served me well, in that it gave me a larger contextual understanding of the vision, purpose, and meaning of Learning Delegations.

This was exhausting research, in that I was staying in Mexico, using Spanish for the logistical parts of my days (such as asking directions or ordering food), paying “deep” attention some days from 6 AM-10 PM, and also checking my recording equipment, backing up recordings and photos, writing field notes, and making sure I was catching all of the nuances I wanted to catch during those five days. During the days before and after the Learning Delegation, I was able to stay with a friend from the local church on the United States side of the border, and during that time there was another person staying there who had shingles. About 50 days after I returned from fieldwork, I also contracted shingles, and was set back for several weeks.

It was also difficult emotionally. There were many moments where I was reminded of my time living in Latin America, likely prompted by the shift in language, but also in a culture that I recognized. I was also keenly aware of my own privilege as a U.S. white citizen, and the ways in which my own government (and my own tax dollars) have contributed to the pain and suffering of so many migrants. I empathized with the other participants through tears and fears and all the heightened emotions that we felt standing near the wall, walking through a cemetery, listening to a judge announce an order of deportation, or hearing someone’s story for the first time. I had to walk the tightrope of tending to my own emotional wellbeing while very intentionally paying attention to all of the details around me, and this was tiresome.

In parallel to writing this dissertation, I have attended protests for migrant rights, visited detention centers, accompanied undocumented friends to legal clinics and appointments

regarding naturalization, helped a friend acquire a green card, submitted expert testimony to the Committee on Homeland Security of the U.S. Congress, made many advocacy contacts through phone, postcard, or email, networked with many immigrant rights groups, helped my church become a Sanctuary Church, and lectured in my community about the importance of humanization and compassion for migrant populations. Even though the process of getting my doctorate took me nearly six years, this dissertation now seems like one little blip in a long, tedious effort for social justice and inclusion of migrant populations.

Future Initiatives

In order to make the information from this dissertation accessible and applicable to the social work profession, I am planning to break it into several different articles for publication. One area that could be explored further in social work is the topic of voyeurism and social work practice, especially in cross-cultural or international contexts. Another area that could be developed is the role of religion and spirituality in peoples' perceptions and actions about migration. In addition, how could social work strategize on reducing the anti-immigrant voices and increasing the pro-immigrant voices in the political arena? Finally, there is something more to develop in the area of feminist theory, aesthetics, and the perceptions of "bodies" on the border.

Study Limitations

The dissertation used a qualitative case study methodology, which was informed by a feminist social justice research framework. This methodology allowed me to conduct a deep inquiry into a particular condition in a particular setting (Creswell, 2012, Yin, 20113). It also allowed for me to consider both process and outcome, which was an important choice for me as a feminist researcher (Stake, 2008). This strategy included three methods: observation, interviews,

and document review. It also used inductive coding (Charmaz, 2016, Padgett, 2016). The initial proposed research questions served as guiding questions for my inquiry. However, additional information emerged in the process of data collection and analysis. The analysis itself was not driven by those specific questions, but instead inductively derived from the analytic process itself.

The transferability and generalization of this qualitative case study, however, is limited. While insights and findings from this study can inform future initiatives related to Learning Delegation-like intervention, specific outcomes cannot be presumed. The participatory nature of my inquiry provided a rich and insightful lens for analysis, but this also means that it was subjective in nature. Even with efforts to member check and verify responses/reactions, researcher standpoint was always a part of the process.

The Consultant Panel I used for this research was largely helpful in the development of my research ideas, in the formation of interview questions, and in helping me adapt and change some of the strategies for the research process. I did not use them in the process of data analysis, as initially planned. For analysis, I did consult with graduate colleagues and professors about interpretation and synthesis of the data.

It is important to note that this dissertation was a not a formal program evaluation. In order to do that, a much more extensive evaluation method would be needed, including more participants, data, and time in the field. Additionally it would have required a shift in paradigm towards a more positivist strategy for conducting the research, including the removal of my own self as a research tool in the collection and analysis of data. The project partner may want to consider a more full program evaluation in the future, especially if they want more information that could include cost analyses or other targeted assessments.

Conclusion

In the last three years, migration-related issues on the Southern border of the United States have dominated media and political discourse. It is an issue that includes so many important components of social work, across population groups and grand challenges. Social inclusion of migrant populations was a concern at the beginning of social work and will continue to be in the future. Therefore, it is important that we begin to strategize about interventions that will address negative attitudes toward migrant populations and misconceptions/stereotypes and migration. As this study indicates, it is just as important to strategize about how to be effective in political advocacy. Learning Delegations are not the only solution to these concerns. However, they are a strategy that could be employed by social workers in a way that is sensitive and respectful to local expertise and helps to facilitate action and advocacy efforts for people who otherwise may not get involved. And they seem to make a difference.

Learning Delegations can shift the narrative to a more inclusive one, done through listening to and sharing of stories and experiences. Ben Okri wrote, “Stories are the secret reservoirs of values. Change the stories individuals and nations live by and tell themselves, and you change the individuals and nations” (Simola, 2002). George & Wilcox (1996), who study and write about political extremist views, suggests that when people make serious judgments about others and express this politically, their perception of reality is distorted. They say this distortion is generally based more on feeling than evidence. Therefore, it is important for people to see a different side of the lens through which they view the world. This may happen through critical self-reflection, exposure to different input, and interactions with others who have a different view. In these efforts, there must be some attempt to establish a common need or sense of mutuality between people with diverse perspectives. We can do this by listening to and

learning from an exchange of narratives and experiences surrounding migration. These stories need to be shared across different perspectives in order to help shape new understandings about migration, and social work is primed to do it.

Even with a century of work providing direct services and doing advocacy work in migration, social work has not fully stepped into the realm of social inclusion and belonging. Belonging is a fundamental human need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). It involves an intimate understanding of who a person is in relationship to another. The barriers we create that keep migrants from social acceptance need to be addressed. These themes have been an integral motivation for social work since the beginning of the profession, and there is powerful potential for social workers to help make a difference as to whether migrants are treated as *others* and/or welcomed into society. Therefore, this study explored a strategy that is used by non-profit organizations to create change related to migrant belonging: a Learning Delegation. This exploration will assist social work by expanding the possibilities of migration intervention to be more considerate of social inclusion.

As I write these concluding thoughts, there are thousands of military troops and hundreds of informal militiamen (paramilitaries) who are swarming the border to meet a “caravan” of mostly Central American women and children who are so scared for their livelihood in their home country they are willing to walk for weeks for a small chance of asylum (Migrant Caravan, 2018). Two small children have now died in the custody of the Customs and Border Patrol (Kight, 2018). President Trump has initiated the longest government shutdown in the history of the United States in effort to push for more funding for a border wall. Along with many social workers, I know there is a lifetime of work ahead of me, in both research and in practice, and I am happy to contribute what I can towards justice. I also know that I am not alone in this effort.

I will continue my work in the light of Rabbi Rami Shapiro's (1993) paraphrased interpretation from the Talmud (Pirke Avot 2:20): "Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly, now. Love mercy, now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it" (Shapiro, 1993, p. 41).

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Appendix A

Letter of Support from Project Partner

[Contact information from project partner]

June 12, 2017

Dear University of Kansas Institutional Review Board,

The [name of project partner] is delighted to provide this letter of support to Jennifer Chappell Deckert, who is a doctoral student at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. I am writing this letter on behalf of the [project partner name]-U.S.A. in my capacity as executive director. Jennifer will be conducting research connected to our Learning Delegation, facilitated by [name of coordinator], Coordinator of Immigration Education at [Name of project partner], which will explore participants' experiences on our learning tour and its effect on their view about migration. Her project is titled *A Qualitative Study of a Learning Delegation*.

We understand that her research will be participatory in nature, and are willing to assist and collaborate with her in the conduct of her study. We realize that in order to protect the participants in our study, she will not be identifying our organization or any research participants in any products of her research. Jennifer will share an executive summary of her findings for the [project partner] archives.

We agree to permit Jennifer Chappell Deckert to access and to request informed consent from people who can provide key information for her study, including through field observation of a tour and interviews with participants and others involved with the program, including:

1. Current enrollees in our Learning Delegation
2. Past enrollees in our Learning Delegation
3. Support staff, volunteers, and educators for our Learning Delegation
4. Facilitators and administrators for our Learning Delegation

We understand that this information will be held in strict confidence and we will not be informed nor request particular feedback based on individual responses that would have identifying information about research participants.

[Signature of Executive Director for the project partner]

[contact information from project partner]

Appendix B

Invitation Script for Formal Interviews

Dear _____,

You are invited to participate in a research project because of your participation in the [project partner name's] Learning Delegation. The research project will be conducted by me, Jennifer Chappell Deckert. I am a doctoral student at the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. [project partner name] has agreed to support this research.

This research project will explore the experiences of participants, contributors, facilitators, and administrators of the Learning Delegation. Data for this study will be collected by interview, observation, and document review. This study will help future tour planners and participants to have a better experience by providing a deeper understanding of participant experiences. It will also help social workers understand processes that facilitate understanding about migration. I will be a participant on the learning tour while she conducts this research.

Your participation in this project is completely voluntary and will in no way impact your ability to participate in the learning tour. No personal names, organizational names, or particular personal identifiable information will be disclosed through the process of this research unless required by law.

In order to participate in this experience you will be asked to sign a consent form, which will be reviewed with you prior to the tour.

All information derived from this research will be confidential. If you have any questions or concerns related to this project, please contact the first researcher.

Researcher Contact Information:

Jennifer Chappell Deckert
 Doctoral Student
 School of Social Welfare
 1545 Lilac Lane
 Twente Hall
 University of Kansas
 Lawrence, KS 66045
 785-764-5273
 jchappell@ku.edu

Dr. Edward Canda
 Faculty Supervisor
 School of Social Welfare
 1545 Lilac Lane
 Twente Hall
 University of Kansas
 Lawrence, KS 66045
 785-864-8939
 edc@ku.edu

Appendix C

Oral Consent Procedures

Oral Consent for Participant Observation:

As a student in the University of Kansas's School of Social Welfare, I am conducting a research project about the Learning Delegation. I will be observing you in the Learning Delegation to understand the process and content of the Learning Delegation. Your participation is valuable as a member of the Learning Delegation and will last throughout the Learning Delegation. You have no obligation to participate, and you may discontinue your involvement at any time.

Your participation should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, the information obtained from the study will help us gain a better understanding of the effects of programs like this on views about migration. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

I will be taking observational notes throughout the Learning Delegation. Only my faculty supervisor and myself will have access to these notes which will be de-identified and stored on a password protected laptop and the later destroyed after de-identified transcripts are completed. These files will be backed up on Dropbox for Business.

Your willingness to take part in this study means that you are at least 18 years old. Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask me directly or my (our) faculty supervisor, Dr. Edward Canda at the School of Social Welfare. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Research Protection Program at (785) 864-7429 or e-mail irb@ku.edu.

Researcher Contact Information:

Jennifer Chappell Deckert, Doctoral Student
Principal Investigator
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
1545 Lilac Lane
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: (785)764-5273
Email: jchappell@ku.edu

Supervisor Contact Information:

Edward Canda, Ph.D., Professor
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare.
1545 Lilac Lane
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: (785) 864-8939
Email: edc@ku.edu

Oral Consent for Informal Interviews:

As a student in the University of Kansas's School of Social Welfare I am conducting a research project about the Learning Delegation. I would like to ask you a few informal questions to obtain your views on the Learning Delegation experience. Your participation is expected to take about 30 minutes. You have no obligation to participate, and you may discontinue your involvement at any time.

Your participation should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. Although participation may not benefit you directly, the information obtained from the study will help us gain a better understanding of the effects of programs like this on views about migration. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

****This interview will be recorded.** If at any point you are uncomfortable with the recording, please notify myself, and we can shift to note-taking. The recordings will be transcribed by me or a professional transcriptionist. Only my faculty supervisor, a member of my committee, or myself will have access to recordings or notes that will be de-identified and stored on a locked laptop and the later destroyed after de-identified transcripts are completed.

Participation in the informal interview indicates your willingness to take part in this study and that you are at least 18 years old. Should you have any questions about this project or your participation in it you may ask me or my (our) faculty supervisor, Dr. Edward Canda at the School of Social Welfare. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the Human Research Protection Program at (785) 864-7429 or e-mail irb@ku.edu.

Researcher Contact Information:

Jennifer Chappell Deckert, Doctoral Student
Principal Investigator
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
1545 Lilac Lane
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: (785)764-5273
Email: jchappell@ku.edu

Supervisor Contact Information:

Edward Canda, Ph.D., Professor
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare.
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Lawrence, KS 66044
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Appendix D

Guidelines for Observations

The researcher will situate herself within the research context and participate in all activities related to the Learning Delegation. During this time, she will keep notes of the following:

- Time, date, location
- Notes on the physical environment
- Notes on the participants: their questions/comments, interactions, and verbal reflections
- Maps of physical environments, interactions or descriptions
- Notes on patterns of communication and interactions
- Notes indicating research reflections and responses to the observations

Appendix E

Formal Interview Consent Form

INTRODUCTION

My name is Jennifer Chappell Deckert, and I am conducting a qualitative research study as part of my dissertation research at the School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas. The School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. Professor Edward Canda is supervising this project. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit or the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the [project partner name] Learning Delegation and your experience as a participant in or affiliate with this event. These experiences could include your reflections about daily activities, conversations, and interactions related to your experience with the tour and your views about migration on and around the border of Mexico and the United States. This consent form gives your permission to participate in interviews for the purposes of this study. You were invited to participate as a:

- ☐ Current enrolled participant in the Learning Delegation
- ☐ Past enrolled participant in the Learning Delegation
- ☐ Support staff, educator, or volunteer for the Learning Delegation
- ☐ Program facilitator or administrator for the Learning Delegation

PROCEDURES

You will be asked to participate in 1-3 interviews, each lasting 60-90 minutes. Interviews will take place in a location that is private and convenient to you. They will be audio recorded using a digital recorder. The interviewer will also take written notes that will be typed into Word files. The first interview will occur prior to or during the Learning Delegation. The second interview will occur after you have returned home from the Learning Delegation and had an opportunity to reflect on your experiences. This second interview will be conducted via Skype or telephone.

If necessary and if you are willing, the researcher will conduct a brief follow-up interview (no more than 15-20 minutes) with you by telephone (unrecorded), at your convenience, in order to clarify details from the interviews or supplement information if needed. The interviewer will take notes that will be typed into Word files.

The audio recording will be transcribed into a Word file—with all personally identifying information removed—by the researcher or a professional transcriptionist familiar with confidentiality protocols. The information on the audio recording will be used only by the researcher for the purposes of this study and will be stored in a secure, locked location accessible only to the researcher. The audio recording will be destroyed following verification of accurate transcription by the researcher. Your name and identifying information will not be included in transcription or in any research product or report. You will simply be identified by a code or pseudonym in any transcripts. The audio recording and transcript files will be uploaded to Dropbox for Business, de-identified, and then stored on a password protected computer. Any form of materials with personally identifying information will be destroyed within one month of completing this study.

During your interviews, if you feel discomfort with answering any of the questions, your wish to not reply will be respected. Additionally, you may refuse to be recorded or you may have recording stopped at any time.

The researcher will not share information about you unless required by law or unless you give written permission. The researcher asks your permission for the information gathered from this study to be disseminated in the following ways: 1) provide a summary to the research institution; 2) use information in classroom or other presentation situations. Results from this study may be used for reporting or publication with all identifying information omitted as noted herein.

RISKS

Although there will not be questions that are likely to be stressful, there is potential for some emotional reactions during these interviews. The researcher will be careful to monitor and adjust the questions in order to ensure your comfort as you respond.

BENEFITS

While there are no direct benefits for participating, it is anticipated that these findings will inform future professionals who plan Learning Tours or develop similar educational strategies.

PAYMENT TO PARTICIPANTS

There is no payment for participation.

PARTICIPANT CONFIDENTIALITY

The researcher will take steps to safeguard your identity throughout the study, as noted above and herein. Neither your name nor your role in the Learning Delegation will be associated in any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, the researcher will use a code number or a pseudonym rather than your name or role. Your personally identifying information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information without any personal identification for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

REFUSAL TO SIGN CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You are not required to sign this Consent and Authorization Form and you may refuse to do so without affecting your right to any services you are receiving or may receive from the University of Kansas or to participate in any programs or events of the University of Kansas. However, if you refuse to sign, you cannot participate in this study.

CANCELLING THIS CONSENT AND AUTHORIZATION

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to: *Jennifer Chappell Deckert*, jchappellld@ku.edu, 785-764-5273. If you cancel permission to use your information, the researcher will stop collecting additional information about you, and all of the information pertaining to you will be removed.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTICIPATION

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

PARTICIPANT CERTIFICATION:

I have read this Consent and Authorization Form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call the supervisor for this project, Professor Edward Canda, Ph.D., at (785) 864-8939 or e-mail him at edc@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature, I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization Form.

Type/Print Participant's Name

Date

Participant's E-mail Address

Tel Number

Participant's Signature

Researcher Contact Information:

Jennifer Chappell Deckert, Doctoral Student
Principal Investigator
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare
1545 Lilac Lane
Lawrence, KS 66044
Phone: (785)764-5273
Email: jchappellld@ku.edu

Supervisor Contact Information:

Edward Canda, Ph.D., Professor
University of Kansas
School of Social Welfare.
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Appendix F-1
Semi-Structured Interview Guide with Potential Topics and Questions
Current Enrollees in the Learning Delegation
PRE-LEARNING DELEGATION QUESTIONS

Interviews will begin with rapport-building through small talk with general introductions and explanation of the purpose and the process of the research. During this conversation, I will explain the use of terms such as “migrant.” I will also check with participants to ensure they are comfortable, ask if they have questions, express gratitude for their participation, and remind them of all consent agreements, including confidentiality. Because this is designed to be a flexible semi-structured interview guide, spontaneous dialogue will also be encouraged and included in the data collection.

1. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself and the reason you became involved in the Learning Delegation?
 - a. Were there personal and/or professional reasons?
 - b. What sparked your interest?
2. In your registration with [project partner], you provided some basic information about your background (age, gender, religious affiliation, etc).
 - a. May I have your permission to access that information?
 - b. Will you please tell me a little bit more about your background and life circumstance?
 - i. Where did you grow up?
 - ii. Where do you live now?
 - iii. What is your educational background?
 - iv. Will you describe your family to me?
 - v. Have you ever travelled abroad or participated in any other Learning Delegations? If so, what was that experience like for you?
3. Please tell me a little bit about your perspective on migration in general, and your feelings about migration issues at the U.S.-Mexico border?
 - a. What values or guiding principles relate to your perspective on migration?
 - b. Can you describe if you are involved in migration issues? If so, in what ways?
 - c. Do you have any direct relationships with migrants?
4. Please tell me a little bit about your expectations for the Learning Delegation?
 - a. What do you hope to learn?
 - b. Could you tell me a bit more about what in particular about this experience caught your attention?
 - c. Have you done anything like this before, and if so, what was it?

- d. Is there anything in particular that you have done to prepare for the Learning Delegation?
 - e. Are there any parts of the Learning Delegation in particular that make you feel concerned or excited about?
5. What else would you like me to know about your perspective as it relates to the Learning Delegation?
6. Do you have any questions or suggestions for me about this interview process?

Appendix F-2
Semi-Structured Interview Guide with Potential Topics and Questions
Current Enrollees in the Learning Delegation
POST LEARNING DELEGATION QUESTIONS

Interviews will begin with rapport-building through small talk with general introductions and explanation of the purpose and the process of the research. I will also check with participants to ensure they are comfortable, ask if they have questions, express gratitude for their participation, and remind them of all consent agreements, including confidentiality. Because this is designed to be a flexible semi-structured interview guide, spontaneous dialogue will also be encouraged and included in the data collection.

1. I would like to hear about your general reactions and reflections related to your experiences on the Learning Delegation? (can you provide some stories/illustrations of these reflections).
2. Would you please describe any learning or new understandings you gained from the Learning Delegation?
3. What, if any, are the ways your perception about migration has changed as a result of your experience on the Learning Delegation? (can you provide some stories/illustrations of these reflections)
4. Have you shifted your behaviors, ideas, or attitudes as a result of the Learning Delegation?
 - a. If yes, in what ways?
 - b. If no, How did the Learning Delegation reinforce your existing ideas?
5. What values or principles shape your perspective on migration? Have these changed?
6. If you were going on a Learning Delegation again, what would you want to be different?
7. Who would you recommend attend this Learning Delegation and why?
 - a. Would you give them any advice before they went?
8. Is there anything you wish were different about the Learning Delegation?
9. What else would you like me to know about your perspective as it relates to the Learning Delegation?
10. Do you have any questions or suggestions about this interview process?

Appendix F-3
Semi-Structured Interview Guide with Topics and Questions
Past Enrollees in the Learning Delegation

Interviews will begin with rapport-building through small talk with general introductions and explanation of the purpose and the process of the research. I will also check with participants to ensure they are comfortable, ask if they have questions, express gratitude for their participation, and remind them of all consent agreements, including confidentiality. Because this is designed to be a flexible semi-structured interview guide, spontaneous dialogue will also be encouraged and included in the data collection.

1. Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself and the reason you became involved in the Learning Delegation?
 - a. Were there personal and/or professional reasons?
 - b. What sparked your interest?
2. Please tell me a little bit about your perspective on migration in general, and your feelings about migration issues at the U.S.-Mexico border?
 - a. What values or guiding principles relate to your perspective on migration?
 - b. Can you describe if you are involved in migration issues? If so, in what ways?
 - c. Do you have any direct relationships with migrants?
3. What were some of your expectations for the Learning Delegation?
4. I would like to hear about your general reactions and reflections related to your experiences on the Learning Delegation? (can you provide some stories/illustrations of these reflections)
5. Would you please describe any learning or new understandings you gained from the Learning Delegation?
6. What, if any, are the ways your perception about migration has changed as a result of your experience on the Learning Delegation? (can you provide some stories/illustrations of these reflections)
7. Have you shifted your behaviors, ideas, or attitudes as a result of the Learning Delegation?
 - a. If yes, in what ways?
 - b. If no, how did the Learning Delegation reinforce your existing ideas?
8. If you were going on a Learning Delegation again, what would you want to be different?
9. Who would you recommend attend this Learning Delegation and why?
 - a. Would you give them any advice before they went?
10. Is there anything you wish were different about the Learning Delegation?
11. What else would you like me to know about your perspective as it relates to the Learning Delegation
12. Do you have any questions or suggestions about this interview process?

Appendix F-4
Semi-Structured Interview Guide with Topics and Questions
Facilitators/Administrators for the Learning Delegation

Interviews will begin with rapport-building through small talk with general introductions and explanation of the purpose and the process of the research. During this conversation, I will explain the use of terms such as “migrant.” I will also check with participants to ensure they are comfortable, ask if they have questions, express gratitude for their participation, and remind them of all consent agreements, including confidentiality. Because this is designed to be a flexible semi-structured interview guide, spontaneous dialogue will also be encouraged and included in the data collection.

1. Please tell me how became involved in as a facilitator for Learning Delegations?
 - a. What sparked your interest in this work?
 - b. Please describe any personal and/or professional reasons.
 - c. How long have you been involved and what is your role (or roles)? What objectives do you have in this role?
 - d. How many times and in what places have you facilitated a learning delegation?
2. Later in the interview, I will be getting some specific demographic information from you. Meanwhile, will you please tell me a little bit more about your background and life circumstance as it might be relevant in your role as a facilitator?
 (example prompts if needed)
 - i. Where did you grow up?
 - ii. Where do you live now?
 - iii. What is your educational background?
 - iv. Will you describe your family to me?
3. Have you ever travelled abroad or participated in any other Learning Delegations? If so, what was that experience like for you?
4. In what ways, if any, did these background experiences situate you or frame your experience as a leader on the Learning Delegation?
5. What observations or insights can you share with me regarding the participants that come?
 - a. How would you describe the participants that were on your delegation (demographics, interests, age/vocation)?
 - b. What did you perceive about their motivations for coming?
 - c. What kind of reactions do you see from them? (please share any particularly insightful stories or examples).

- d. In what ways, if any, did you see indications of any shifts in their thoughts/beliefs (please describe)?
 - e. What do you think (if anything) were particularly powerful activities or experiences that helped them to learn during the Learning Delegation?
6. Will you please describe the partners that help host Learning Delegations? For example, partners might include...
- a. What challenges or rewards do they face from their involvement?
 - b. What are ways that [the project partner] forms and maintains these relationships?
7. What values or beliefs framed your facilitation of the learning delegation?
8. Can you tell me the ways in which you find this work challenging?
9. Can you tell me the ways in which you find this work rewarding?
10. What are the tensions you feel as a leader in pursuing your objectives and planning your tour?
11. In what ways do you work to balance the schedule and agenda to include intentional encounter, reflection/process time, and time “off”?
12. Are there any particular groups of people that you think might benefit from participating in a Learning Delegation?
13. Among the groups who come, which ones seem to benefit the most? Why?
14. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your perspective as it relates to the Learning Delegation?
15. Do you have any questions or suggestions for me about this interview process?

Appendix G

Topical Guide for Informal Interviews, Observational & Conversations During the Learning Delegations

Discussion Questions for the Group

(to be asked at the end of each day)

1. What were your general reactions to today's visit?
 - a. What stood out to you?
2. In what ways did you learn something from today's interactions? In what ways did your experience reinforce what you already knew?
3. What are some highlights of today's experience for you?

Areas of observation:

What kinds of questions are being asked?

- a. What is the type of question?
- b. What is the focus of the question?

What are the moments that seem to bring strong reactions (awkwardness, tension, joy, sorrow) and why?

What are the general reactions from the group of the Learning Delegation program?

Appendix H
List of Audit Trail Contents

Classification of Data Source	Participant Type	File Types	Volume	Evidence *
Interviews	Current Enrollees (n=5) Each interviewed twice	Audio files Transcripts Consent forms Interview notes	448 minutes 192 pages 5 15 pages	E E P P
	Facilitators/Administrators (n=8) Each interviewed once	Audio files Transcripts Consent forms Interview notes Demographic Forms	544 minutes 187 pages 8 24 pages 8 pages	E E P P E & P
	Past Enrollees (n=6) Each interviewed once	Audio files Transcripts Consent forms Interview notes	336 minutes 113 pages 6 18 pages	E E P P
Participant Observation		Written field notes Typed field notes Debriefing audio files Debriefing typed transcripts	70 pages 25 pages 170 minutes 35 pages	P E E P
Document Review		Learning Delegation documents	12 documents	E & P
Data Reduction & Analysis		Brainstorm notes for general themes Interview notes Initial and final coding guide (with all iterations) De-identification Guide Computer files from atlas.ti Demographic Summary Sheet	1 pages 67 pages 31 pages 6 pages 1082 pages 2 pages	E E & P E & P E & P E & P
Data Synthesis		Drawings, diagrams, and drafts of thematic content & relationships Notes regarding patterns in the data Lists of findings and conclusions	14 pages 14 pages	P P
Procedural Details		Methodological & Reflective log Actual Activity log Timelines	24 pages 3 pages 3 pages	E E E E & P

		Data Chart Procedural, consultation & debriefing notes IRB drafts & submission Consent forms	2 pages 104 pages 45 pages	E & P E & P E & P E & P E & P
Instrument Development		Interview Guides (Drafts and Final) Observation Guides (Drafts and Final)	2 pages	E & P E & P

* E = Electronic (stored securely on the computer and backed up on a hard drive) files

P = Paper files stored in a binder and locked file cabinet

Appendix I

Data Analysis Strategy

